

Iraqi opposition official's brother commits suicide in Amman

AMMAN (AFP) — The brother of an Iraqi opposition official shot himself in the head in Amman on Saturday, police officials said Monday. Imad Alawi, 50, an Iraqi businessman in Jordan, was the brother of Iyad Alawi, secretary general of the Amman-based Iraqi opposition group Al Wifaq al Wataani. Police found the body of Imad at the entrance to a house in a residential quarter Saturday evening after he was alerted by a caretaker in the building. The dead man left three suicide notes saying he wanted to kill himself, the police said without elaboration. Police are basing their initial investigations on the assumption that he committed suicide, the officials said. Imad Alawi, who came from an affluent family, was a successful businessman who travelled frequently between Amman and London, sources close to the family said.

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Regent receives Peres

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Monday received former Israeli prime minister and former leader of the Israeli Labour Party Shimon Peres and reviewed with him developments of the Middle East peace process, following the Wye Plantation agreement between the Palestinians and Israel. The audience was attended by Royal Court Chief Jawad Al Anani and senior government officials.

Clinton pledges to boost aid to Palestinians by \$400 million

WASHINGTON (AP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat accused Israel Monday of undermining the Palestinian economy and said anew that he hopes to establish an independent state. Even so, President Bill Clinton said the Mideast peace effort was on track and pledged additional U.S. aid for Gaza and the West Bank.

"momentous constraints" have made the suffering of the Palestinian people unbearable. "The Israeli closure policy is the primary and direct cause for the dangerous decline in the performance of the Palestinian economy over the past five years," Arafat said.

A text of Arafat's remarks was released to reporters. He referred to the policy of Israel's current Likud government and previous Labour governments to close the borders to Gaza and the West Bank to try to stifle terrorists who hatch their plots in and come from Palestinian-controlled areas.

The closures and partial closures have the effect also of severely limiting access to jobs in Israel for tens of thousands of Palestinian workers.

Clinton said the United States had staged the conference "to send a clear signal that this peace is more than a piece of paper."

He added: "We must convince those who have invested so much in this process that it was a sound investment."

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said the \$500 million pledged by the United States at the first donors conference in 1993 had improved access to water for more than 250,000 people, provided 10,000 loans to Palestinian entrepreneurs and helped fund the first-ever elections in Gaza and the West Bank.

But despite "your generous financial assistance," Arafat told delegates from more than 40 nations,

(Continued on page 12)



U.S. President Bill Clinton (C) shakes hands with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat (R) as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (L) looks on during the Conference to Support Middle East Peace at the U.S. State Department in Washington on Monday (AFP photo)

EU pledges \$460 million for Palestinians over five years

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The European Union plans to provide around \$460 million in assistance to the Palestinians over the next five years, Austrian Finance Minister Wolfgang Schuessel said here Monday.

"I am pleased to be able to announce that the European Union (EU) intends to commit some 400 million European Currency Units (\$460 million) from the Community budget over the next five years," he said in remarks prepared for an international donors' conference.

Austria currently holds the rotating presidency

of the EU, which in 1993 pledged \$421.5 million over five years to support the Oslo peace accord signed that year by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

The EU was one of some 50 countries and multilateral institutions represented at Monday's one-day gathering here aimed at boosting financial aid to Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza Strip from 1999 to 2003.

Total international aid pledged in 1993 was \$2.3 billion, of which about \$2.1 billion has so far been disbursed.

Jordan insists on refugees' right of return and compensation

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan insists that Israel accepts both the right of return of Palestinian refugees and financial compensation, Prime Minister Faysal Tarawneh said Monday.

"We say that the right of return, and compensation are the pillars of the negotiations," said Tarawneh at the government's weekly press briefing, in response to Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon's statement Sunday that the Palestinian refugees should be integrated in the countries in which they currently live, as part of any final status deal.

The premier said that although Palestinian refugees have received full citizenship rights in Jordan, "their political and historical rights" have yet to be

addressed.

"This matter is of utmost importance to Jordan," he said. "It is one of the main items (on the final status agenda)...especially considering that (Jordan) has the largest number of UNRWA registered refugees."

Jordan, which hosts 1.8 million refugees, has met with several Palestinian and Israeli officials over the past few weeks to clinch a commitment from both sides that its interests will be considered in any final status deal.

The right of return of Palestinian refugees, most of whom were forced to flee their homes in Palestine after the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, is one of the most contentious issues between the Jewish state

and the Palestinian National Authority.

There are international laws such as the 4th Geneva Convention, and U.N. resolutions 194 and 242 which discuss the refugee issue, "and all these must be taken into account," in the negotiations, said Tarawneh.

On final status negotiations, Tarawneh once again said that Jordan will not partake in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, but wants full coordination with both parties to ensure that its interests are fully secured.

The mechanism for final status negotiations so far remains unclear, said Tarawneh, and it is still unknown what role the U.S. would play.

Search for Lebanese premier starts after Hariri rejects job

BEIRUT (AP) — Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, the business tycoon who launched Lebanon's multibillion dollar reconstruction from the devastation of civil war, said Monday he was bowing out as premier following a dispute with the new president.

He accused President Emile Lahoud of violating the constitution and demanded that he acknowledge it before he could reconsider his position.

Hariri's move could be a ploy to gain more power as a new government is formed, but the crisis atmosphere generated by the possible departure of the billionaire businessman could affect Lebanon's economic recovery.

"I'm not a candidate," Hariri said in a live interview with

CNN. He demanded that Lahoud admit that he acted unconstitutionally by allowing 31 parliament deputies to authorise him to name a prime minister instead of naming one themselves.

Such an action "might put the country in danger," Hariri warned. Asked if there was a risk of renewed conflict in Lebanon over the alleged tampering with the constitution, Hariri said: "If the president continues with this, I don't know what will happen."

But the dispute between the two leaders appears to be over who will have the upper hand in governing the nation of 3.2 million.

Lahoud, 62, is an army commander who wants to assert his authority at the start of his



Rafik Hariri

six-year presidential term.

Hariri, 53, virtually has had a free hand in running the country since he became premier six years ago under former President Elias Hrawi.

(Continued on page 12)

Two new items to be added to Iraq's food rations

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraqis relying on food rations for the past eight years will have two new items in their diet in January, under the oil-for-food deal with the United Nations, newspaper reports said on Monday.

Trade Minister Mohammad Ali al-Sayid was quoted in Al-Thawra, the main ruling party newspaper, as saying that cheese and powdered milk would be available for the first time since the oil pact went into effect two years ago.

He did not say how much each Iraqi would receive. Each Iraqi citizen is now entitled every month to nine kilograms of flour, 2.5 kilograms of rice, two kilograms of sugar as well as tea, soap and other items.

Sayid was quoted as accusing the United States of upping contracts for food and medicine under the deal which allows Iraq to sell limited quantities of oil to buy urgently-needed items.

"Because of American and British blackmail we have only received food and medicine worth \$187 million out of \$1.1 billion under the fourth phase of the deal which ended on November 25," Sayid said. Foodstuffs have been in short supply in Iraq since U.N. trade sanctions imposed on Baghdad for invading Kuwait in 1990 blocked oil exports, its main source of foreign currency.

Palestinians keep up protests for prisoner release

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Protests calling for the release of Palestinians held in Israeli prisons entered their second week on Monday as hundreds of Palestinians took part in two marches in the Gaza Strip.

Some 200 relatives of Palestinian prisoners protested outside the headquarters of the Red Cross in Gaza City, shouting slogans against Israel and the Palestinian negotiators who reached the Wye River agreement last month, witnesses said.

Holding pictures of their loved ones aloft, the protesters called for the issue of Palestinians held in Israeli prisons to be put at the top of the negotiating agenda with Israel.

The demonstrators also put handcuffs on children taking part in the march and put black bags over their heads in imitation of Israeli treatment of Palestinian prisoners, witnesses said.

Meanwhile in Rafah, in the south of the Gaza Strip, about 400 high-school students set fire to car tyres and shut several streets for over an hour.

The students called on Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to intervene to obtain the release of the prisoners and shouted slogans against the Wye River agreement, witnesses said.

There were no reports of any arrests at either of the two marches.

The Wye River accord signed last month in Washington commits Israel to releasing 750 Palestinian prisoners in three groups of 250 over a twelve-week period.

The first release was carried out 10 days ago but Palestinians have been incensed that only 100 of the 250 freed were political prisoners. The remainder were common criminals.

A series of protests then erupted across the Palestinian territories between supporters of prisoner groups and Palestinian and Israeli police.

Demonstrating groups have issued statements and hurled invective at the Palestinian leadership for what they see as too many concessions to Israel on the issue of prisoner releases.

A meeting Sunday of Israeli and Palestinian negotiators charged with overseeing implementation of the Wye River accord was dominated by the prisoner dispute, with the Israeli side refusing to budge on its refusal to release political detainees accused of violence against Israelis.

The dispute threatens to hold up further application of the peace accord, under which the Palestinian Central Council should meet by the end of the week to confirm the cancellation of anti-Israeli clauses in the Palestinian National Charter.

Israel continues to hold more than 3,000 Palestinians in its prisons.

Italy mulls Ocalan fate, talks with Moscow

ROME (R) — Italy, seeking to solve the diplomatic dilemma of what to do with detained Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan, said on Monday he could appear before an international court but the idea had yet to be studied in full.

Speaking at a meeting with the foreign press corps, Italian Interior Minister Rosi Russo Jervolino acknowledged that neither she nor the government knew now exactly what form such a court could take, but stressed it was just one of the options open.

Asked what type of international court Italy had in mind for Ocalan, arrested in Rome nearly three weeks ago, Jervolino said:

"I will speak frankly... I have to say I do not know and neither does the Italian government."

"It is a procedure that is being discussed... There is no mystery about it, it's simply

what eventual procedure there could be," said Jervolino.

The Ocalan case has landed Italy in a highly sensitive situation. The leader of the outlawed Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) was detained in Rome because international warrants for his arrest had been issued.

Germany last week declined to follow up on two German arrest warrants for Ocalan, saying his extradition for trial could provoke unrest among its two million immigrant Turks and Kurds.

An Italian court ruled it could not recognise a Turkish arrest warrant because he could face the death penalty there.

Ocalan was arrested after flying to Rome on a false passport from Moscow, where he had spent a month. Ocalan has applied for political asylum in Italy but if the request is turned down, he may be expelled back to Russia.

A Council of Europe official said on Monday Italy could satisfy European legal requirements by trying Ocalan itself but Italy has never sought to do so.

Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini discussed the fate of the rebel guerrilla leader in Moscow with his counterpart Igor Ivanov and with Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov during a previously scheduled visit now dominated by the Ocalan affair.

Antonio Verde, spokesman for the Italian embassy in Moscow, said Dini and Primakov exchanged information during their talks.

"Minister Dini said he was satisfied with the exchange," Verde said, but neither he nor the Russian government gave details.

The ball is now in Italy's court, Jervolino said an interior ministry commission could not hear Ocalan's request for

asylum until after Dec. 22 — when a 40-day deadline after arrest for extradition requests to be received expires.

Ocalan's lawyer in Rome, Giuliano Pisapia, said on Sunday Ocalan was willing to face an international court because it would give him a chance to prove his innocence.

The problem is that no such international court exists. The International Court of Justice in the Hague is able to hear disputes between nations but not charges against individuals.

A United Nations tribunal was set up in the Hague specifically to hear war crimes and atrocity cases committed during the war in Bosnia.

A special court may be set up in the Netherlands to try under Scottish law two Libyans suspected of bombing a U.S. airliner over Lockerbie when Tripoli decides to hand them over.

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THE CITY NEVER SLEEPS

Clinton envoy to visit Lebanon in political crisis

Shalala visit intended to help build ties

CAIRO (R) — U.S. President Bill Clinton is sending Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala to Lebanon as his personal representative to meet its new president amid a growing struggle over the Arab country's leadership.

Shalala, who is of Lebanese origin and the highest-ranking Arab-American to serve in a U.S. cabinet, will be the first member of the Clinton administration to visit Lebanon after this month's inauguration of Lebanese President Emile Lahoud.

Her visit, intended to send a signal to Beirut of Washington's desire to strengthen ties, was planned before the announcement on Monday that Lahoud had accepted caretaker Prime Minister Rafik Hariri's refusal to head a new government.

Lahoud is to start consultations to choose a new premier after Hariri declined Lahoud's request to remain in his post.

"I think the fact that it is an official trip representing the president of the United States, it can be interpreted as a warm sign to the people of Lebanon and to their new president and new government of the impor-

ance that the United States places on our relationship with Lebanon and how pleased we are that at least some of the security issues are beginning to be resolved," Shalala told reporters in Cairo late on Sunday.

She said her visit to Lebanon was intended to "indicate that the United States is anxious to help the new government get settled and to improve the quality of our relationship."

She said she would go to Beirut after a visit to Egypt ending on Tuesday, and to Israel and the West Bank, but she could not be more specific because of security considerations.

The United States bore the brunt of attacks and hijackings during Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war and was the apparent target of an unsuccessful rocket-propelled grenade attack in June.

Last year, Washington lifted a decade-old civilian travel ban imposed during Lebanon's war. It still considers the country a dangerous place to visit and U.S. airlines do not fly to Beirut, but the two countries are slowly rebuilding ties.

This month, U.S. Commerce Secretary William Daley said in a short trip to Beirut that his department was establishing a representative office in the Lebanese capital.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright spent a few hours in Lebanon last year. Shalala said her stay would be the longest.

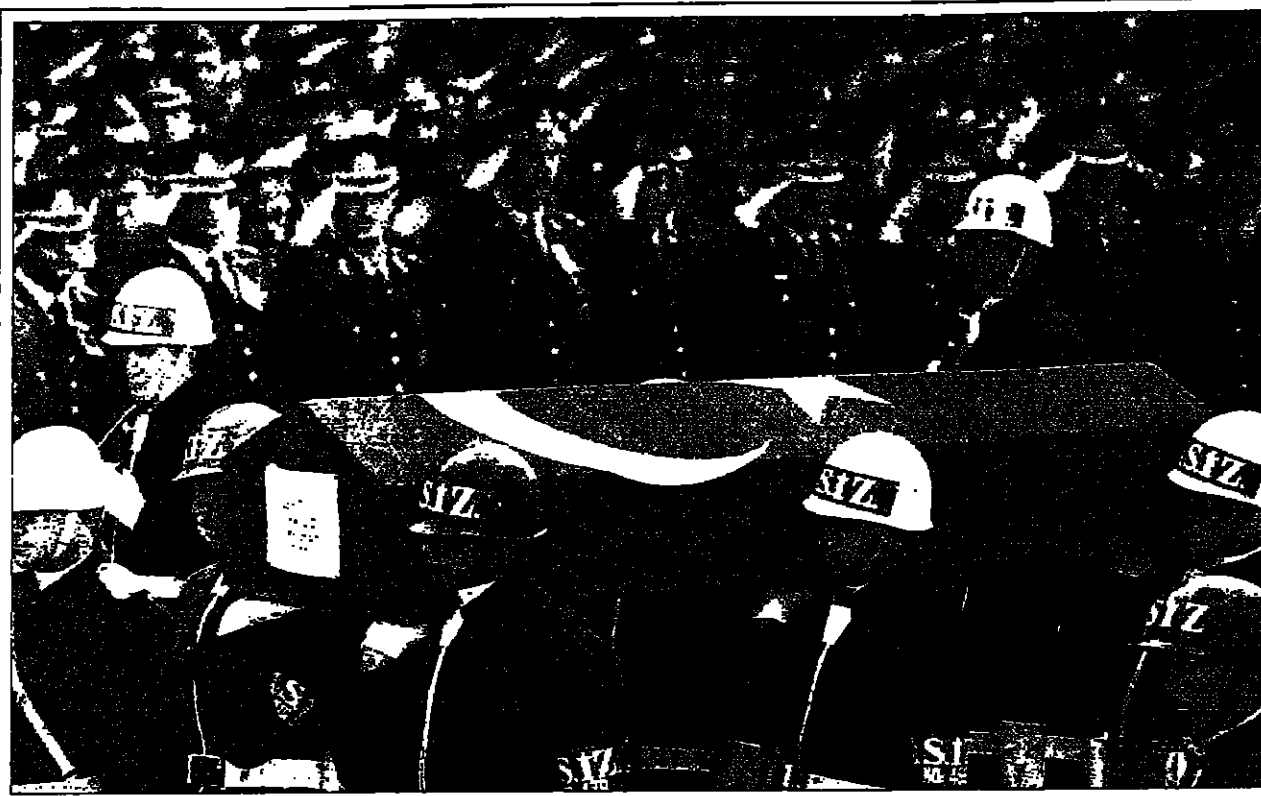
"I'll be the first cabinet member who will stay overnight. So I'll be there for a number of days," she said. "It's officially designated by the president as a presidential visit."

Lebanon is rebuilding its economy after the war and is keen to lure foreign investment.

Lahoud has pledged to make law enforcement a priority.

"I am taking no secret messages to the government of Lebanon. I am simply going to go and most of us have not been there in 20 years," Shalala said.

"I think this is a longer visit to not simply contact the leaders but to look at Lebanon's recovery, and it will allow me to report back to the president after getting out of Beirut and having a chance to talk to people."



FUNERAL FOR TURKISH SOLDIERS: Army officers salute Monday during the funeral in Ankara for the 16 Turkish soldiers who lost their lives when their helicopter was downed by PKK rebels on Nov. 27 (AFP photo)

Group urges rights guarantees in donor agreements with PNA, Israel

AMMAN (J.T.) — Human Rights Watch called upon donor governments meeting in Washington on Monday to incorporate human rights guarantees in all their agreements with Israel or the Palestinian National Authority, an HRW statement said.

In a letter released yesterday, the New York-based human rights group urged that all new aid, trade, or security treaties include explicit provisions for monitoring and preventing human rights violations by Israeli or Palestinian forces.

The group sent the letter to ministers from the Middle

East, Europe, Japan and Russia to coordinate funding for implementing the Wye River Memorandum. Israel and the PNA signed the security memorandum on Oct. 23.

"The Wye River agreement lacks any mechanism for preventing human rights violations," said Hanny Megally, executive director of Human Rights Watch's Middle East and North Africa Division. "Making aid conditional on human rights performance would force both Israelis and Palestinians to take rights seriously."

Megally noted that since

signing of the agreement, the PNA has conducted mass arrests of political opponents, increased restrictions on journalists, and made incitement to "breaching agreements" signed with the PLO a criminal offense.

Human Rights Watch also expressed concern over Israel's violation of Palestinian human rights, including torture, administrative detention without proper judicial review, hostage-taking, house demolition, and the imposition of strict closures in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The group urged the minis-

ters to question U.S. officials on the role of the Central Intelligence Agency in monitoring the memorandum's implementation. CIA officials represent the U.S. on the U.S.-Palestinian and U.S.-Palestinian-Israeli monitoring committees created by the agreement.

"Secret intelligence agencies have a poor record of respecting human rights," said Megally. "In the past the CIA has been silent when groups it supported committed gross human rights violations. How can we depend on it to speak out now?"

Jordan calls for Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Jordan on Monday reiterated its position calling for an unconditional Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon in accordance with United Nations Resolution 425.

At a press conference, Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh said the responsibility of security in south Lebanon should be shouldered by the Beirut government.

Tarawneh was responding to the current escalation in south Lebanon between Israel and the Lebanese resistance group Hizbollah following the killing of seven Israeli soldiers over the past two weeks in the occupied zone.

The Israeli cabinet yesterday decided not to withdraw unilaterally from the south of Lebanon.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu cut short a European tour and headed back to Tel Aviv following the killing of the Israeli soldiers.

Tarawneh said Security Council Resolution 425 should be the basis for any settlement to the conflict.

"The Lebanese state should be in charge of the security of the border zone [with Israel]. This is the required formula."

Israeli military authorities complain of uphill struggle with Jewish settlers

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli military authorities in the West Bank complained Monday that they did not have the means to counter a rash of illegal land grabs by Jewish settlers in the territory.

"We are working more against the settlers than the Palestinians," said Shlomo Dror, spokesman for the military coordinator of Israeli activities in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Since Israel government and the Palestinians signed their latest land-for-security agreement last month in Washington, Jewish settlers have launched a wide-scale offensive to seize more land before it can be transferred to Palestinian control.

Dror said the occupation authorities had been overwhelmed by the settler drive, which has included moving mobile homes onto more than a dozen hilltops, opening unauthorized roads and in one instance seizing an unoccupied Palestinian house.

"They are very organized, they know how to manipulate the system," Dror told

AFP.

"They believe in what they are doing, and they have very good lawyers. When they want to build, they can raise 50-100 people. We are not that many," Dror said.

Near the settlement of Kedumim in the northern West Bank, one group of settlers led by the enclave's militant mayor Daniella Weiss have seized nearby hilltops more than half-a-dozen times over the past two weeks.

After each night-time settler action, the army has been forced to intervene, sometimes physically carrying the militants from their remote hilltop perches.

While the military says it is taking action to halt illegal land seizures, Israeli political leaders have encouraged the settlers.

Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, a leading hawk and architect of the settler movement, called earlier this month for Israelis to "run, grab as many hilltops as possible" to keep more land from falling into Palestinian hands.

Dror said that despite the

politicians' rhetoric, the military was trying to curb the settlers.

"From our point of view it doesn't matter whether it's settlers or Palestinians, this is against the law," he said.

But he acknowledged that once settlers have moved their mobile homes to a vacant hilltop and begun legal proceedings to defend their right to live there, the army's options are limited.

Dror said that once the caravans are parked his only tactic is to threaten an end to official cooperation on further development back inside the settlement.

Often this works but sometimes it does not — as is the case with the notoriously extremist settlers of Yitzhar "where there is no one to talk to," he said.

Since Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, it has created 144 Jewish settlements which are now home to some 160,000 people.

The future of the settlements is to be decided in so-called final status negotiations which are to begin early next month under the Wye River accord.

ADEN (AFP) — Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh on Monday branded the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) a "secessionist" movement as the group announced the rehabilitation of three former leaders of the breakaway south.

"It is a secessionist party which refuses to modify its methods of the past," the president said at a ceremony marking the 31st anniversary of British troops' withdrawal from Aden.

He called on the YSP to "apologise to the nation for having triggered the war of

secession and proclaimed a secessionist state," in a reference to a 1994 civil war in which the party sought to establish a new Democratic Republic of Yemen in the south.

President Saleh's forces won the war after a three-month battle.

As he condemned the YSP, the party wrapped up its fourth congress in the capital, Sanaa, by announcing that three former southern leaders expelled from its fold were being welcomed back.

In its final statement, the

group said it decided "to cancel the dismissal" of former YSP party secretary Ali Salem Al Baid, former Prime Minister Haidar Abu Bakr Al Attas and politburo member Saleh Ebeid Ahmad.

They had been ejected for their involvement in the 1994 conflict.

The three men were part of a group of five former southern leaders sentenced to death last March by a Sanaa court for high treason, violating the constitution and murder.

The party also said it "offered

its apologies to the victims of the unrest, clashes and violence in Yemen in which the socialist party was involved."

A Yemeni government newspaper branded the YSP Monday a "slave to the past" and condemned its first congress in 13 years.

"The YSP is chewing over the past and continues to follow methods of deception, lies and the muzzling of mouths," the "October 14" newspaper said.

"The servants cannot live in a democracy, because they are slaves to the complexes of the past," the daily said.

At the congress's opening session Saturday, current secretary general Ali Saleh Qhad, criticised the government for not taking its calls for reconciliation at face value and practising "a policy of exclusion" against the party since the civil war.

The previous, 1985 congress was dominated by rivalry between two party factions which led to bloody fighting in the streets of the then southern capital of Aden the following year and the death of several thousand people, including several party leaders.

'Mass grave with more than 25 bodies unearthed in Iraq'

CAIRO (AP) — A human rights group affiliated with an Iraqi opposition group said Monday that a mass grave contains the remains of more than 25 bodies has been unearthed near a farm in an eastern Iraqi province.

The Centre for Human Rights said the mass grave was discovered on Oct. 15 by Jubair Abdullah Alayawi while digging near his farm in the Diyala province, 60 kilometres northeast of Baghdad.

The group, affiliated to the London-

based Iraqi Communist Party, said that shortly after Alayawi found the grave, security men arrested him and his family still unaware of his whereabouts.

The group did not say who was behind the murders of the 25 victims, but it put the slayings in the context of its complaints about the regime of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

"We once again call on the U.N. human rights organisations to take urgent steps to put an immediate halt to the con-

tinuing mass terror," the group said in a statement faxed to the Associated Press in Cairo.

The statement also said that four Iraqi political prisoners, including two officers, were executed on Nov. 12 in the Badoush prison in Mosul, 400 kilometres north of Baghdad.

It named the officers as Major Mahdi Saleh Rakan and Captain Omar Taha Salem and said the prison authorities did not hand over the bodies to their families

and instead left them at the province's municipality.

Iraq has been systematically executing political prisoners, some of them have been in detention since the abortive uprising of the Shiite Muslim southern towns in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf war.

In April, the U.N. human rights commissioner responsible for Iraq, former Dutch Foreign Minister Max van der Stoep, said as many as 1,500 people may have been executed in Iraq last year.

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15:30Cartoon - Bonanza in Pajamas
16:00Doc - Life Choices
16:30Small Talk
17:00Doc - Mothers of the Wild
18:15French Programmes
.....Les Yeux D'Helene
19:00Le Journal
19:15French Programme
19:30News headlines
19:35Comedy - Step by Step
20:00What Would You Do?
20:30Drama - Tom Jones
21:05You and Your Car
21:30UN Cu
22:00News in English
22:30Lonesome Dove
23:10 Feature film - "The Counterfeit Green"
00:30End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:51Pajr
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11:25Dhuhr
14:13Asr
16:36Maghreb
17:58Isha

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slightly, skies partly cloudy, and
winds northwesterly moderate. In
Aqaba, winds will be northerly
moderate, and seas calm.

Amman08/19
Aqaba17/25
Deserts07/21
Jordan Valley15/27

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 17, Aqaba 23 Humidity
readings: Amman 47 per cent,
Aqaba 35 per cent.

Following are the temperatures
expected today in the following
areas:

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Jerash13/22
Um Qays10/21
Madaba08/21
Petra05/21
Dead Sea16/29

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Roman Catholic Hospital
.....02/272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital
.....02/7101372, 02/7103101
Rosary Sisters Hospital
.....02/7102831,
02/7102011
Speciality Hospital02/7103100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital .03/2040111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA
AIRPORT

This information is supplied by
Royal Jordanian (RJ) information
department at the Queen Alia
International Airport Tel.
(44)53200-5, where it should
always be verified. Information on
other flights can be supplied on
phone 44 (52700). Information on
Royal Wings flights can be sup-
plied on phone 4875201-5

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:00Aqaba (add) (RJ)
08:25Amman, New York (RJ)
10:50Berlin, Brussels (RJ)
11:05Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
12:00Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:10Paris (RJ)
12:15London (RJ)
12:30Cairo (RJ)
19:35Beirut (RJ)
20:30Jeddah (RJ)
20:45Damascus (RJ)
21:00Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights
12:30Aden (IY)
14:35Istanbul (TK)
18:00Dubai, Damascus (EK)
18:40Beirut (ME)
18:45Kiev (GU)
19:05Paris (AF)
20:25Tel Aviv (LY)
20:40Cairo (MS)
22:25London, Damascus (BA)
23:35Amsterdam (KL)
23:55Lamaca (CY)
00:55Bucharest (RO)
02:00Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
09:30 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA)
(RW)
11:10 Aqaba (arriving at Marka
Airport) (RW)
16:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka
Airport) (RW)
18:45 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA)
(RW)
22:50 Aqaba (arriving at Marka
Airport) (RW)



HRH Princess Sarvath and French Ambassador Bernard Emie attend a ceremony for Jordanian students who visited France recently (Photo by Boghos)

Princess Sarvath praises Jordanian-French ties

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath has praised Jordanian-French relations and the friendly ties between the two peoples.

The Princess said French President Jacques Chirac's state visit to Jordan in 1996 was instrumental in promoting cultural exchanges between the two countries.

In remarks at a ceremony held Sunday evening by French Ambassador to Jordan Bernard Emie to honour a group of Jordanian students who visited France recently within the framework of a Jordanian-French cultural exchange programme, Princess Sarvath said the French language is a means for learning about the cultures of the Francophone nations with which Jordan maintains relations.

She added that through the French language, one can discover the history and culture in which France played a significant role.

"One cannot imagine Europe without France in terms of its power and its initiatives and successes in various fields," the Princess added.

She urged the students to exert all possible efforts to acquire knowledge, which she said is the right tool for confronting the future developments.

Thanking Princess Sarvath for attending the ceremony, Emie underlined the importance of cultural exchanges between the two countries.

He said Chirac's visit gave a boost to the French language as part of Jordan's educational system, noting that the Council of Higher Education has approved the teaching of French in schools and established French language departments at state universities.

The ambassador added that the French government has introduced Arabic in the French school system as part of a general policy towards opening up to other cultures, which he described as essential for building strong ties with various nations.

Emie called for further efforts to encourage cultural exchanges between French and Jordanian students.

The ceremony was attended by the ministers of education and culture and youth as well as a number of senators, deputies and heads of diplomatic missions.

The eight-page memorandum, which was released at a press conference on Nov. 7, also reflected the opposition's fear of being sidelined, especially if pro-government parties are invited to take part in the dialogue.

But Tarawneh stressed yesterday that "one cannot put forward a memorandum, with an agenda, and judge a priori that the dialogue will not succeed unless certain conditions are met."

The premier denied a news item published Monday in the Arabic weekly Al Majd according to which the government was planning to stop the national dialogue following the parties' memorandum.

"Nobody should say that the dialogue has failed only because there has been no answer [to the parties' memorandum] as of yet," Tarawneh said.

He said the memorandum carried the names of the 13 opposition parties in the Higher Committee for Coordination Among the Opposition Parties, but added that there were no signatures by party leaders or representatives.

"We need to see commitment," he said.

Urging parties not to judge the outcome of the dialogue beforehand, the prime minister cited the "very successful" dialogue experience with the professional associations.

"They did not come with a prefixed agenda," he said, "and dialogue is moving on."

The government held talks with leaders of the country's 13 professional associations on Oct. 17, in the first of a series of meetings in the national dialogue, expected to resolve a long-standing crisis which peaked with the opposition's boycott of the November 1997 general elections.

The government has created a special ministerial committee, headed by the premier, to maintain the momentum of a national discourse that His Majesty King Hussein resumed in May after the elections boycott and that was continued by HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, during the summer.

However, Tarawneh yesterday pointed out that "the prime minister does not need to be present at each and every meeting of the dialogue," as it falls within the mandate of each minister to carry out a dialogue with the social parties concerned with each ministry's function.

The national dialogue was included in the tasks specifically entrusted to Tarawneh in the Royal letter of designation.

Opening the second ordinary session of the 13th Parliament, the Regent on Saturday reiterated the government's commitment to mutual consultation and open dialogue among all society sectors.

"Dialogue is not meant to be an exercise in futile argumentation and sophistry. We see it rather as a sophisticated instrument for benefiting from the aspirations of our citizens, their creativity and grand insight," Prince Hassan said in the traditional Speech from the Throne.

Tarawneh reiterates government's commitment to national dialogue

Opposition should not limit dialogue to prefixed agenda — premier

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — The government on Monday reiterated its commitment to an open and transparent dialogue with all sectors of society but said opposition parties should not limit this national process to a prefixed agenda.

"Dialogue is neither a government monopoly, nor should it be limited to political parties," Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh said at a press conference.

"We believe in dialogue as a multi-faceted, ongoing, and comprehensive process, the agenda of which will be delineated during and through the process itself."

The prime minister was referring to a memorandum by 13 opposition parties which listed peace and normalisation with Israel, the press and elections laws, the economic restructuring programme, and inter-Arab ties as the issues they intended to tackle in the national dialogue.

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'Majority of newspapers meet deadline for adjusting to press law'

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh

AMMAN — Most of Jordan's dailies and weeklies met a deadline set by the Press and Publications Department, which expired yesterday, to rectify their legal status in accordance with the 1998 press law.

APPD official told the Jordan Times on Monday that the five daily newspapers — Al Ra'i, Al Dustour, Al Arab Al Yawm, Al Aswaq and the Jordan Times — had submitted all the required materials.

He said all weeklies, except Al Mithaq, Al Hadaf, Sawt Al Mar'a, Akhbar Al Osbou, and Fares, have rectified their status.

On Nov. 1, the PPD issued a circular to all periodicals asking them to submit the proper credentials by the end of the month.

"The period ends by midnight today [Monday], and there will be no extensions," Information Minister Nasser Judeh told reporters during a weekly press briefing. "The law is clear on the 90-day period."

"Most papers have rectified their situation," he said. "If there is any delay, it is due to logistical reasons, [and] therefore the government will be flexible and does not have any intentions of taking immediate and narrow-minded decisions."

The PPD said the publications that did not meet the deadline will be suspended for three months, during which time those periodicals can rectify their status.

If the papers, however, do not adjust their situation by the end of the three months, the department said it would be forced to shut them down.

In the circular to around 30 publications, the PPD called on dailies to submit bank notes certifying that they hold a capital of no less than JD500,000 along with a memo from the Jordan Press Association certifying that the paper's chief editor is a journalist as defined by the 1998 Press and Publications Law, a Jordanian resident who has worked in the profession for a minimum of eight years, a member of the association for at least three years, and someone who has never been convicted of a crime that forced him/her to stop writing. It also called for the editor to possess reading and writing proficiency in the printed language of the publications.

Specialised publications need to meet a capital requirement of JD5,000 and should have a chief editor with a minimum relevant experience of five years. The capital requirement for weekly publications is JD100,000.

The 1998 Press and Publications Law went into effect Sept. 1, despite hopes of amendments by journalists, editors and human rights organisations.

The press body had described the law as a "penal code" for journalists, and human rights organisations said that if the law were not amended, it would endanger Jordan's press freedoms.

Several analysts and human rights advocates charged that many articles in the law contradict both the Constitution and international conventions to which Jordan is a signatory.

They also asserted that ambiguous language coupled with exacting penalties, including a legal mechanism to close down newspapers found in violation of the law, would be used to "harass" journalists and force a regime of self-censorship on newspapers.

The government has reiterated on several occasions that it would adopt a soft and lenient approach in implementing the law and would pursue a peaceful dialogue with the entire press body. But it made no mention of further amendments to the law.

'Crackdown on illegal foreign labour continues'

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Scores of illegal foreign workers are being deported almost daily in a government drive to crackdown on foreign labourers in the Kingdom, an official said Monday.

In response to charges by businesspersons and economists that the government's campaign to streamline the foreign labour force has lost steam, Labour Minister Mohammad Mahdi Farhan said that the government is serious about curbing the high number of foreign workers in the country and that persons caught without a permit will immediately be deported.

The official, who requested anonymity, could not disclose the exact number of people who have been deported and said foreigners of different nationalities are being sent out of the country, including Arab nationals, Asians and Africans.

According to Labour Ministry, figures around 107,000 foreigners have rectified their status since the crackdown began two months ago. One

Labour Ministry official who preferred not to be named said an average of 500 foreigners rectify their status daily at the ministry's offices around the country.

Farhan said the government will activate Article 12 of the Labour Law, which stipulates that employers who hire foreigners without work permits are liable to fines ranging from JD50 to JD100 for each month the employee works. He called on employers to obtain work permits for their employees or be held accountable.

But one Egyptian worker told the Jordan Times on Monday that he does not need to obtain a permit. "I only have to be careful not to get into trouble, which is the only way the police can ask me for my work permit, and I can stay in Jordan forever."

Interior Minister Nayef Qadi had earlier said that Jordan hosts a large number of foreigners that could number nearly one million.

Unemployment in Jordan is officially estimated at 16 per cent and independently at 27 per cent.

which tells the dramatic ending of an ancient temple.

Greece's "Hades" depicts a man who abandons the safety and security of his world, home, work and family, and attempts a descent into the other world.

"El Maestro de Esgrima" (The Master of Fencing), from Spain, portrays incidents in the life of the master of fencing in Madrid in 1868 under the reign of Queen Isabel II.

"Un Air de Famille" (Family Likeness) is a comedy about the life of a French family.

"Karakter" (Character), a 1997 Oscar winner as best foreign film from the Netherlands, is the story of a detective intrigued by a murder and the relationship between the suspect and his apparent victim.

Sweden's "Passageraren" (The Passenger) tells the story of a female taxi driver and an armed passenger who are pursued by a motorcyclist in a countryside journey.

"The Woodlanders," from the U.K., portrays the life of a community which has been sustained by the surrounding woodland for centuries, neither knowing nor needing much from the outside world.

"L'albero delle pere" (The Pear Tree) is an Italian contribution to the festival.

Films will be screened at 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. All films are subtitled in English.

European Film Festival opens Wednesday

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — Ranging from dramas and thrillers to comedies and romances, 10 films will be presented by European Union member states at the 10th European Film Festival, to open Wednesday at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom will screen recent films during the 16-day event.

The economic councillor at the Delegation of the European Commission in Jordan, Ramon Mestres, said the festival will be an opportunity to further enhance the cultural exchange between EU countries and Jordan.

"The strong support and warm reception which the event has enjoyed for years attest to the unique relations between the Kingdom and the EU," Mestres told reporters Monday. "It confirms that our peoples place great value on cultural interaction and the need to work together on creating deeper ties and better understanding at the cultural and human levels."

Tickets to the films are JD1 for adults and 500 fils for students, who can attend a special afternoon show. The festival's proceeds will go to the Young Women's Muslim Association's Centre for Special Education.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Police investigate shooting death

AMMAN — Police are questioning the family of a 38-year-old man who was found shot dead in his house in Karak on Sunday morning, according to official sources. The body of Khalid Mohammad, an engineer at Mu'ta University, was discovered by his brothers and sisters at around 5:00 a.m. in their family home in the Adnanieh area, eight kilometres from Karak's city centre, one source said. "Police are questioning the father and brothers of the victim in connection with their possible involvement in the shooting incident," the source said. Carcass said Mohammad was shot seven times in the head, neck and chest. Another source told the Jordan Times that the victim "might have been killed over family problems." Police contacted by the Jordan Times Monday evening declined comment and said they were investigating the incident.

Tarawneh visits statistics department

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh Monday praised the efforts of the General Statistics Department in providing accurate and timely information and statistics for planners. During a visit to the department, Tarawneh voiced his government's full support for the department to enable it to carry out its duties effectively. He asked the department to provide him with a report of a survey on labour and unemployment that was carried out during the third quarter of this year. Tarawneh assured the department's staff about His Majesty King Hussein's health, saying that his condition is excellent.

Kreishan calls for national traffic body

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Tawfiq Kreishan on Monday suggested that public and private sector institutions create a higher national body to handle issues related to traffic and road safety. Addressing the opening session of a seminar entitled "Towards Safe Traffic," Kreishan said the public and private sectors should combine efforts towards reducing the increasing number of road accidents. The minister called for a national plan to deal with the road safety problem. He called on heads of municipal councils to place this problem at the top of the list of priorities.

what's going on

CHRISTMAS CHARITY BAZAAR

* Annual Christmas charity bazaar, sponsored by the American Women of Amman, at the Marriott Hotel on Friday Dec. 4, 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. (Tel. 5699634).

CONCERT

* Musical performance by Pilar Jurado (soprano coloratura) with the participation of Manuel Rodriguez and Julio Muñoz (piano) at Terra Sancta Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

FILM

* "While You Were Sleeping" at the Books@Café, Jabal Amman at 8:30 p.m. (Tel. 5661717).

EXHIBITIONS

* Works of 17 British artists and painters from the Nineteenth Century at the British Council, Jabal Amman, until Dec. 10.

* Oil paintings by Ali Najjar at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Dec. 14.

* The Tenth Anniversary Exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh (Tel. 4643251/2), until Jan. 28.

* Photography exhibition entitled "Windows and Doors" by Hani Hourani at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Dec. 18.

JMA asks government to crack down on 'illegal' doctors

By Suha Ma'ayeh

AMMAN — The Jordan Medical Association wants the government to help it crack down on over 150 foreign physicians who are allegedly working illegally in the private sector and at some hospitals operated by state-run universities. JMA officials have said.

They said the JMA had asked the ministries of health and interior to support their effort to weed out these doctors, mostly Iraqis and Syrians.

It said they were operating at private clinics and at the Jordan University Hospital and King Abdullah Hospital, which belongs to the Jordan University for Science and Technology near Irbid, without obtaining a licence from the Health Ministry.

"They are also levying cheaper fees, thus creating a source of unfair competition for Jordanian doctors with similar qualifications," said one JMA official.

According to JMA rules, any Jordanian or non-Jordanian physician must register with the JMA to be able to practise.

"Many of these non-Jordanian physicians have been practising illegally for the last three years, but pressure on us from private sector doctors mounted because they started competing with them while accepting lower treatment fees," a JMA official told the Jordan Times.

Other JMA rules stipulate that prior to licensing and registering any non-Jordanian physician, he/she must have a speciality in demand in Jordan or work for a registered, non-profit medical organisation, as well as hold a residence permit.

"We are not against non-Jordanian physicians if they practise at the Health Ministry because they do not pose any competition to the private sector," added Ahmad Armouti, JMA secretary general.

"But the problem is that the University of Jordan and JUST are employing foreign specialists who are creating unfair competition," he added.

According to other JMA rules, any non-Jordanian physician who wishes to pursue his/her higher studies at the Jordan University Hospital or JUST can be registered with the JMA and obtain a resident licence.

"We encourage such [specialist] physicians to practise in Jordan because their jobs are unpaid since they are trainees and they generate additional income for university hospitals," Armouti stressed.

Many of the 400 Iraqi physicians who registered with the JMA to practise temporarily cancelled their memberships after finding jobs in other countries.

Government officials were not available for comment.

Xmas & Ramadan

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Anwar counsel wins jail reprieve

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — A defence counsel of ousted Deputy Premier Anwar Ibrahim won a last-minute reprieve against a three-month jail sentence for contempt of court Monday, as hundreds of lawyers descended on the main courthouse.

"We want justice!" the lawyers and family members shouted as Anwar defence counsel Zainur Zakaria emerged from the court building, visibly shaken but still smiling after a day of drama.

After handing down the jail sentence earlier, presiding judge Justice Augustine Paul ordered Zainur to surrender himself to the court at 4 p.m. (0800 GMT).

But Court of Appeal president Lamin Yunus granted an interim stay of execution against the sentence pending a hearing set for Friday afternoon, said Pawancheek Merican, another member of

Anwar's defence team.

He told reporters that bail for Zainur had been set at 10,000 ringgit (\$2,600).

Zainur had been sentenced by Paul after refusing to apologise for allegations that prosecutors tried to fabricate evidence against Anwar contained in a court application he filed Saturday on behalf of the ousted deputy premier.

"We are shocked, completely shocked," said one of the chanting lawyers who turned out to see Zainur as he emerged from the court, in the same central Kuala Lumpur building where Anwar's corruption trial, now in its 16th day, is taking place.

He added Zainur's three-month sentence was a "blow to every lawyer in this country."

"He is brave. He is our hero," said another lawyer who asked not to be named.

A third lawyer, P. Uthayakumar, said he and



Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (right), wife of sacked Malaysian finance minister Anwar Ibrahim, arrives at the Malaysian High Court in Kuala Lumpur, while her daughter Nurul Izzah Anwar (centre) assists Anwar's mother, Che Yan Hamid. Anwar accused prosecutors last weekend of trying to get a businessman friend to fabricate evidence of sex crimes by him (Reuters photo)

other lawyers were proposing to hold an emergency meeting of the Malaysian bar council "to discuss the welfare of a fellow member of the bar."

"We need a minimum of 50 people and we have already 57. I've already submitted the proposal," he said. "We'd like to have it as soon as possible."

The drama blew up during the trial of Anwar, sacked by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in September, which is hearing four corruption charges.

all denied by Anwar.

The former deputy premier has also pleaded not guilty to a fifth corruption charge and five accusations of sodomy.

Strong earthquake kills at least six in Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — A powerful earthquake struck two small, remote islands in eastern Indonesia at night, killing at least six people. Volunteers spent Monday searching through ruined buildings and landslides for survivors.

Local government officials said at least 153 people were injured and more than 180 homes and buildings were damaged.

Roads were cut and bridges destroyed, hampering search and rescue efforts.

Local police Sgt. Hafid said three men and three women had been confirmed dead on worst-hit Mangole Island. No deaths were reported on neighbouring Taliabu Island, despite widespread injuries and damage.

Two strong aftershocks were felt and hundreds of people ran to the safety of a soccer field on Mangole after the magnitude-6.5 quake struck Sunday night. More than 7,000 people were spending Monday night in tents or in the open in fear of their homes collapsing.

Dozens of wooden houses slid into the sea and one of many landslides destroyed Mangole's main docks.

Witnesses said large cracks scarred the streets of Mangole's largest town, Dofa, and elsewhere on the island, which has a population of about 38,000.

Officials feared the numbers of dead and injured could rise as information came in from

outlying villages.

Urgent supplies of food and medicine were needed, they said.

Neither island has a major hospital. A local government official, Karim Wamona, said emergency flights were taking seriously injured victims to neighbouring islands for urgent treatment.

"People are now gathering in a football field. There was a lot of panic. They are too afraid to sleep because there might be aftershocks," police Sgt. Yopi Sariwating said by telephone from Mangole.

He said the quake lasted only a few seconds.

"But it was biggest anyone here had ever felt. This is the worst damage this island has had from an earthquake," Sariwating said.

Hafid said five people were killed when the roof of a plywood factory collapsed.

The official Antara news agency quoted factory executives as saying more workers might still be trapped in the wreckage.

A sixth victim died when the landslide buried the docks. At least three loading vehicles had been swept into the sea.

The search for casualties was continuing on the island, about 1,900 kilometres (1,180 miles) northeast of Indonesia's capital, Jakarta.

Electricity supplies had been cut and telecommunications with both islands were patchy, Indonesia's Meteorological and Geophysics Agency said

the quake had a magnitude of 6.5.

It struck at 10:10 p.m. (1410 GMT) Sunday and was centred beneath the Maluku Sea, about 370 kilometres south of the city of Manado on the island of Sulawesi, the agency said.

Earlier, the U.S. Geological Survey in Washington said the quake had a preliminary magnitude of 7.6.

The geological survey issued a tsunami warning for the Western Pacific. The alert for Japan, however, was lifted after about two hours.

Mangole, an island dominated by the timber industry, is part of the Maluku archipelago, known in colonial times as the Spice Islands.

In December 1992, a magnitude-7 earthquake caused a tsunami that killed about 2,500 people on nearby Flores Island.

More than 2,000 people were killed in July when a tsunami hit the northern coast of neighbouring Papua New Guinea.

Earthquakes are common in Indonesia, which lies astride the so-called Pacific "Ring of Fire" — a line of volcanically active areas that stretches from Central America and the western coast of North America across to Japan, Southeast Asia, the South Pacific and New Zealand.

A magnitude-6 quake can cause severe damage if centred beneath a heavily populated area, while a magnitude-7 quake can cause widespread, heavy damage.

Hun Sen, new cabinet sworn in

PHNOM PENH (R) — Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen and his new coalition government were sworn into office on Monday, ending 17 months of crisis since the previous administration collapsed in violence.

The National Assembly passed a vote of confidence in favour of the coalition between Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and FUNCINPEC, the party of the former partner he ousted in July last year. Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

Before the vote Hun Sen unveiled his government's programme, promising broad fiscal reform, less spending on security and tough action on corruption, illegal logging and crime.

He also said Cambodia would seek to regain its seat at the United Nations and secure membership of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

"I believe this government will work effectively," Hun Sen told reporters after the vote. "Cambodia's entry to ASEAN is one priority, and to get back Cambodia's U.N. seat is another."

Cambodia's membership of the nine-member ASEAN was postponed last year after Hun Sen ousted his then senior co-premier Ranariddh. Its seat U.N. seat was also left vacant.

Economists say the new government faces a host of daunting challenges and must implement reforms and direct more resources into health, education and

agriculture.

The poverty-stricken country has been spending up to 50 per cent of its annual budget on security. Political analysts say the virtual demise of the Khmer Rouge rebel group gives the coalition a golden opportunity to redirect public funds.

"This provides a lot of possibilities for FUNCINPEC and CPP cooperation, to move forward to the 21st century," Hun Sen told reporters, referring to the collapse of the Khmer Rouge.

Hun Sen said leaders of the Khmer Rouge, held responsible for the death of an estimated 1.7 million people during their 1975-79 rule, must be brought to justice.

Later, Hun Sen and his cabinet, all clad in traditional formal attire, were sworn in at the Royal Palace in the presence of the man Hun Sen ousted last year.

Ranariddh was last week voted in as National Assembly president under a deal he struck with Hun Sen this month. The prince is also acting head of state in the absence of his father, King Norodom Sihanouk, until a Senate is set up.

Under their coalition pact, the two former rivals agreed the Senate chairman would serve as head of state when the king was away. CPP president Chea Sim will chair the new Senate.

Monday's vote of confidence needed the support of two-thirds of assembly members.

Hun Sen's CPP and Ranariddh's FUNCINPEC party together have 107 seats in the 122-member assembly. Hun Sen's party won a slim majority in a July election but not enough seats to govern alone.

Ninety-nine of 116 assembly members present on Monday voted for the coalition and 13 against, including opposition leader Sam Rainsy. Three members abstained and there was one spoilt ballot.

CPP member Keat Chhon retained his post as the finance minister and the new foreign minister was Nor Nam Hong, a CPP member who held the portfolio in the early 1990s.

Ranariddh and Sam Rainsy contested Hun Sen's election win saying his ruling party won through fraud and intimidation. But Ranariddh agreed to join Hun Sen in a coalition after coming under what he said was intense international pressure.

Sam Rainsy and diplomats said it remained to be seen if the new government would live up to its promises. "All that is fine," said one diplomat of Hun Sen's policy statement. "The question is if they have the political will to carry it out."

Hun Sen and Ranariddh shared power as co-premiers in a coalition set up after Ranariddh's party won the most seats in a U.N.-run election in 1993. That coalition collapsed last year when Hun Sen ousted Ranariddh.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Chile Socialist urges Pinochet trial in Chile

MADRID (R) — Chile's leading leftist candidate for president, Ricardo Lagos, has called for a political commitment to reform the judicial system and bring former dictator Augusto Pinochet home to stand trial. Lagos, who heads the Social Democrats and is the favourite to win next year's election, told newspaper El Pais in an interview published Monday that the arrest of Pinochet in Britain could be converted into an opportunity to push ahead with reform. Asked whether the Chilean democracy and judicial system was strong enough to try the former dictator, Lagos answered: "The commitment and willingness of the Chilean people in this direction is indispensable ... we need a political commitment". Pinochet was arrested in London on October 16 following a request from Spain for him to be extradited to face charges of murder, torture and genocide. Britain's highest court last week ruled that he did not enjoy immunity from facing the charges, and Britain's Home Secretary Jack Straw now must decide before Dec. 11 whether extradition can go ahead. Pinochet is on bail, but under police guard at a London clinic where he is recovering from back surgery. He ruled in Chile from 1973 to 1990, awarding himself amnesty before handing over to democracy.

Report of mutiny by Zimbabwean troops in Congo slammed as 'lies'

HARARE (AFP) — The Zimbabwe defence ministry has dismissed as "malicious and blatant lies" a local report suggesting that Zimbabwean troops deployed on the government side in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) were mutinous. The weekly Independent reported a week-and-a-half ago that fears of a mutiny by the troops sent to prop up President Laurent Kabila's regime against rebels forces in the DRC had prompted the government to send in 1,500 military police. It said the deployment came in the wake of growing indiscipline among soldiers reluctant to fight a war they felt had nothing to do with Zimbabwe. But a statement from the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) said: "The reports are malicious and blatant lies aimed at discrediting the image of the ZDF". "There was never any special deployment of military police details," said the statement, adding that the military police strength was in any event less than 1,000. "The presence of a few military police members in the DRC is perfectly normal and should not be cause for alarm to any knowledgeable journalist," the army statement said. The Independent, whose report quoted unnamed military sources, also said that four senior army officers were due to be court-martialled for not reporting for duty and alleged defiance of orders. It said that discontent among the troops there was made worse by erratic supplies of food and medicines on the eastern front and heavy casualties. Zimbabwe, which has an estimated 6,000 troops in the DRC, has admitted to just seven deaths among its soldiers in this foreign campaign so far.

Bangladesh court demands explanation on rights abuses

DHAKA (AFP) — Bangladesh's High Court has demanded the government answer claims from rights groups that police were responsible for deaths and torture in custody and of abusing their powers of arrest, officials said Monday. "The High Court issued the rule Sunday asking the government to show cause as to why it should not be directed to refrain from unwarranted abuse of power and to strictly follow the constitutional provisions for arrests and investigation," a court official said. The court also asked the government to explain why authorities should not be asked to give monetary compensation for "police torture and custody deaths," the official added. The bench issued the ruling on top officials of the law and home ministries as well as the police chief after a writ petition filed by the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Service Trust (BLAST), a coalition of human rights groups. The defendants were asked to reply within eight weeks. According to press reports, BLAST cited at least three deaths in police custody and a number of other incidents of custodial torture and rape in the past several years. It called the actions "palpable violation of human rights which are protected by the constitution." The petition came six months after a university student was killed in police custody following his arrest on suspicion, sparking a nationwide protest and anti-police demonstrations. Several police officials are facing trial after they were arrested following the death of Shamim Reza Rubel who was in the custody of detectives in Dhaka. Press reports said that in the capital alone some 100 people are detained by police every night under a law that allows police to detain someone for "suspected movement," a charge which BLAST said was widely abused.

Michael Jackson eyeing U.K. school for son Prince

LONDON (R) — Pop superstar Michael Jackson was reported Monday to be considering sending his son to an elite British private school. Jackson, whose son Prince is 21 months old, has sent an aide to check out Stowe boarding school in Buckinghamshire, north of London, which charges 15,000 pounds (\$25,000) a year per pupil, British newspapers reported. Former pupils include Virgin business tycoon Richard Branson. Jackson would be following in the footsteps of American singer Madonna, who has put her two-year-old daughter Lourdes down for the straight-laced Cheltenham Ladies College in southern England. "Michael has always been a fan of the British private school system and knows what a good education it offers. Friends told him about Stowe and he liked the sound of it. But once he heard all the details he was sold on the idea," an aide of Jackson's was quoted as telling the Sun newspaper.

Thief poses as bag of frozen meat

MOSCOW (AFP) — A thief posed as a bag of frozen meat to get himself locked up in a warehouse for the night so that he would be able to help himself to other property stored there, ITAR-TASS news agency reported Monday. The man, who hid in a sack, had another sack with him which he intended to fill up during the night in the depot in the Perm region of the Urals. An accomplice was due to collect both bags in the morning. But the plan fell apart when a warehouse employee tripped over the sack accidentally. She was amazed when it moved as it was supposed to contain frozen meat to be sold at market. She opened the bag and found herself eyeball to eyeball with a man's head. When he started to get out the sack, she came to her wits and locked him in. The man was arrested, as was his accomplice on arriving to collect the bags, ITAR-TASS said.

Members of Congress divided on impeachment or censure

WASHINGTON (AP) — Impeachment proceedings against President Bill Clinton are headed for a December finale in the House of Representatives amid doubts about whether lawmakers have the votes to impeach or the will to censure.

The House is expected to vote in mid-December on whether to send articles of impeachment to the Senate. House Majority Whip Tom DeLay, a Texas Republican, said Sunday on CNN's "Late Edition" that he thought a majority of 218 would vote to impeach. But other Republicans said they did not have the votes.

House Judiciary Committee hearings resume Tuesday with testimony from convicted perjurers, some of whom have served jail terms. Democrats say it is meaningless because there is no proof that

Clinton perjured himself about his sexual relationship with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky and no legal basis for equating perjury with impeachment.

A more pivotal hearing could be on Dec. 8, when Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde, an Illinois Republican, has invited Clinton or his representatives to testify. The White House has not decided how to respond to the invitation, but Republicans say it could be a last chance for Clinton to admit he lied about his relationship with Lewinsky.

Republicans said Clinton missed such a chance in his written responses last week to 81 questions submitted to him by Hyde, in which the president stuck to his grand jury assertions that he did not have sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky.

"Right now, to me he is

an unrepentant perjurer who should lose his job unless he changes his tone," said Rep. Lindsey Graham, a South Carolina Republican who is a Judiciary Committee member.

Graham and a committee colleague, Rep. Ed Bryant, a Tennessee Republican, said on NBC's "Meet The Press" they opposed the less drastic step of censuring the president while keeping him in office.

But Rep. Peter King, a New York Republican, said that while Clinton's conduct was "reckless, irresponsible and I believe illegal, I just don't believe it is impeachable."

If the House impeaches rather than censures and sends the issue to the Senate for trial, "we are going to tie up the country for six months," he said.

Congressional Democrats and White

House officials also were promoting censure or some lesser punishment.

"We continue to hope that a bipartisan consensus emerges in the House to reflect what is a broad and bipartisan public view that the allegations do not warrant impeachment," White House spokesman Jim Kennedy said.

Two of the Democrats' sharpest critics of the president's behaviour also pushed for censure. Sen. Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut wrote in a New York Times column Sunday that if impeachment is defeated in the House and there is no censure option, "the nation would be left with an unclear and unacceptable conclusion to this crisis."

Retiring Rep. Paul McClellan of Pennsylvania, the first House Democrat to urge Clinton to resign, said the president's alleged wrongdoings

may be impeachable, but the nation clearly wants him to stay in office.

"We can honourably conclude this matter with something short of impeachment" if Clinton shows more candour, McHale said.

The Judiciary Committee, in the days following the proposed Dec. 8 hearing, is expected to vote on at least one article of impeachment, probably perjury. The case could go to the full House the following week.

King said he knew of 15 to 20 Republicans who would vote against impeachment in the full House, while McHale said he was aware of only two or three Democrats seriously considering a vote in favour of impeachment.

With Republicans holding a 228-206 majority in the current Congress, along with one Democratic-oriented

independent, that could put the impeachment vote just short of the 218-vote majority.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Sen. Orrin Hatch, a Utah Republican, said on ABC's "This Week" that he saw a "50-50 chance" that the House would refer articles of impeachment to the Senate. He said he would meet with Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott of Mississippi, Democratic leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota and others to prepare for that possibility.

Censure becomes an option if it is clear the Senate does not have the two-thirds, or 67 votes, to convict, Hatch said on ABC's "This Week."



South Korean monks and their civilian supporters fight with riot police in an attempt to break through police lines and join their beleaguered colleagues in the headquarters of the Chogye temple in Seoul. Hundreds of monks, engaged in a fierce power struggle, fought pitched battles for control of the sect (Reuters photo)

Seven monks injured in violent clashes at S. Korean Buddhist temple

SEOUL (AFP) — Hundreds of rival monks fought pitched battles at the headquarters of South Korean Buddhism Monday, exchanging punches and hurling rocks and firebombs, leaving seven injured in a dispute over the election of a chief administrator.

The grounds of Chogye temple in central Seoul turned into a battlefield for some 1,000 monks and their way through the grounds, to oust rival monks holed up at the temple's five-storey administration building.

One follower was hit by a flying stone and hospitalized. Six other monks were injured during the fighting, which raged for several hours around the building, which was surrounded by some 2,000 followers.

Some 100 monks wearing masks and hoods locked themselves into the building, barricaded with logs

and furniture, while their colleagues exchanged kicks and punches in the grounds.

At one point, fire broke out when the monks poured gasoline and hurled firebombs. But the blaze was put out immediately by a fire truck.

The monks on the grounds fought back with rocks, watched by thousands of riot police and followers, and witnessed by AFP correspondents.

Some monks hurled rocks while others inside the building hosed down those trying to remove logs stacked around the entrance, while others hurled abuse and cursed.

"Come out," an angry young monk yelled, urging those holed up in the building to allow a free election after ending their occupation.

The fight came to a brief halt when police using a bulldozer smashed down a barricade at the temple's back gate, clearing the way for a raid.

Thousands of riot police armed with clubs, shields and tear gas launchers surrounded Chogye, the hub of South Korean Buddhism, which boasts 10 million followers.

But police did not intervene in the free-wheeling fistfight, the latest in a series of clashes which crippled a planned election in early November and left dozens of monks injured.

"We do not want to intervene in the internal fight. But police will be sent into the temple if violence is out of control," a police commander told AFP.

The one-month battle has disrupted the election of Chogye's secretary general, who is in charge of finances and management for hundreds of temples in South Korea.

The Buddhists have been divided into two groups — the Purification and Reform Committee (PRC) and the Constitution Safeguards Committee (CSC).

PRC members occupied the temple two weeks ago, saying they were supported by top monk Wolha and other senior monks. But the rival faction accused them of seeking illegal control of the temple's administration.

"A majority of Buddhists hope to elect the chief administrator through a fair and clean election," the CSC said in leaflets, accusing Wolha of dictatorship.

"Buddhism has been exposed too much to politics. We need to restore our tradition based on zen and independence from politics," said the CSC, supported by dissidents and young monks.

Buddhism is South Korea's most followed religion with 15 centuries of deep-rooted tradition. But its modern history has been marred by factional fights and political interference.

"Purification," read a giant banner fluttering across the concrete and brick building girded with sashes.

Suu Kyi hits out at military gag attempt

BANGKOK (R) — Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi accused the ruling military of trying to silence the pro-democracy movement by making visiting journalists promise not to make contact with her.

The 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner, in a rare interview, also accused the generals of making excuses to avoid a dialogue with her National League for Democracy (NLD), which they have kept from power despite its landslide election win eight years ago.

"I think the authorities are anxious to make sure the world does not get to hear about us or hear from us," Suu Kyi said in Yangon last week in videotaped answers to questions from Reuters.

"I understand there has been a campaign in recent weeks to persuade correspondents to promise they would not see me — that they would be given a visa, they would be promised a journalistic visa, provided they make an undertaking not to see me, not to talk to me."

"I think that's the main

reason why you haven't heard much from the NLD, because there has been a deliberate campaign to prevent the world from hearing from us."

She said it was vital for the NLD to be able to communicate with the outside world.

"People all over the world need to be alerted to what is happening in Burma... unless they are informed of what is going on it will be difficult for them to voice their support for what we are doing. I think keeping lines of communications open is very, very important."

Asked how the world should react, she said: "We would appreciate the world coming out with messages of support and we would like elected parliaments of this world, especially, to support our committee."

She was referring to a committee the NLD set up in September to represent the parliament elected in the 1990 poll.

Suu Kyi said that as of Nov. 19, 182 NLD MPs and about 600 other party members were in detention, although some had since

been released.

Most were detained after the party vowed in September to convene parliament.

"Many, many continue to be under detention and I understand the health of some detainees is not good."

"In general you can say they have released those whom they have either coerced into making some kind of undertaking not to support the NLD any more or those who are in a precarious state of health and they don't want to be responsible if anything happens to them," she said.

"I understand the authorities say that if we give up the call for the convening of parliament, they would release all the detainees, but we have made it quite clear we are not going to give up our demand that parliament be convened."

Suu Kyi brushed aside calls in the military-controlled media for the disbanding of the NLD and her deportation.

"We have made it quite clear that even if they did deregister the NLD we would continue with our work... we'll carry on

wherever we are, whether it's in or out of prison."

She said she was not worried by calls for her deportation. "Since I'm a Burmese citizen and a citizen of no other country, I can't see how they can deport me unless of course they buy up the moon and take me there."

She said the NLD was not engaged in any dialogue with the military and accused the generals of breaking an agreement on confidentiality after a high-level meeting described by the government as a "confidence-boosting" step earlier this year.

"Certainly our confidence was not built up by what happened," she said.

Suu Kyi said the government's position that no dialogue was possible while the NLD committee claimed to represent parliament was "their latest excuse for not having dialogue."

"If they really want dialogue they would be ready at any time. As long as they don't want dialogue they will come up with some excuse and this is just one of the many."

Biotech companies face backlash if no ethical debate

ADELAIDE (R) — Scientists and biotechnology companies pursuing genetic research should promote full and open debate on their work or risk public backlash which could halt their studies, a leading bioethicist said Monday.

Senior Australian judge Michael Kirby told Reuters the debate on the cloning of human cells, sparked by the cloning of Dolly the sheep in Scotland in 1996, highlighted the risks when science outstrips debate on ethics.

"Unless there is a proper, thorough explanation to the community of the scientific arguments for cloning, the natural response of a community ignorant of the potential benefits is to simply say 'this is unnatural... we should ban it'," he said.

Kirby is a member of the bioethics committees of the United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Human Genome Project, an international effort to map and sequence all human genes.

Public fears sparked by the cloning of Dolly were heightened this month with the cloning in the United States of an adult human cell.

Scientists at the Massachusetts-based biotech company Advanced Cell Technology said they had fused human cells into cow eggs to grow stem cells for tissue transplants, not to grow an embryo that would essentially be a human clone.

Speaking at GeneCom '98, a privately organised international conference on gene technology, Kirby said efforts to address the ethical dilemmas posed by genetic research were being hampered by lack of funds.

He said multinational cor-

porations which stood to make significant commercial gains from that research should contribute more to debate, both financially and intellectually — if only out of self-protection.

"Unless you engage the community in debate about these issues, the result will be that instinctive, intuitive responses will rule the science and that may not be for the benefit of either humanity as a whole or science in a particular community," he said.

Kirby also blamed the media for a lack of serious public debate, saying its approach to many issues led scientists to remain silent about their research out of fear of being "trivialised, sensationalised or demonised."

"We have to develop media reporting of this issue which will ensure the scientists do not simply retreat into their laboratories," he said.

'Serb Adolf Hitler' set to go on trial at U.N. court

THE HAGUE (AFP) — The genocide trial of the self-styled "Serb Adolf Hitler", Goran Jelisic, was due to open before the U.N. war crimes tribunal here later Monday.

The Bosnian Serb pleaded guilty last month to murdering and torturing Bosnian Muslims and Croats but he said he was innocent of the charge of genocide, believing that his acts were not part of a systematic plan to exterminate the Bosnian Muslim population.

He already faces life imprisonment following his guilty pleas but will be sentenced by judges at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for those crimes only once his trial on the genocide charge is over.

Jelisic held a post at the Luka detention camp near the northern Bosnian town of Brcko, where Bosnian Muslims and Croats were held in appalling conditions, between May and July 1992, prosecutors alleged.

"He introduced himself as the 'Serb Adolf', said that he had come to Brcko to kill Muslims and often informed the Muslim detainees and others of the number of Muslims he had killed," the indictment said.

Jelisic, now 30, pleaded guilty to 12 documented killings, four acts of torture, and plunder, carried out in the space of two weeks in May 1992 in Brcko when he was 23 years old.

However prosecutors believe he carried out and ordered "countless others".

The trial was to start with the prosecutor's opening statement at 2:00 p.m. (1300 GMT).

It is the second genocide trial to open at the ICTY. The first, of Bosnian Serb doctor Milan Kovacevic, was never completed after Kovacevic died shortly after the trial started.

The ICTY has officially indicted 56 men for crimes committed during the 1991-1995 Balkan wars.

A total of 29 are still at large, including former Bosnian Serb political leader Radovan Karadzic and his military commander, Ratko Mladic.

AIDS to hurt S. Africa more than rest of Africa

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South Africa, suffering one of the world's fastest spread of HIV epidemics, will feel more pain from the disease than the rest of the continent because its economy is more developed, the United Nations said Monday.

"It is precisely because South Africa has a relatively sophisticated economic system that its economic performance is so vulnerable to the effects of the epidemic," said a joint report issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the U.N.'s programme on HIV/AIDS.

The more skilled and experienced population experiencing HIV infection, the greater the impact will

be — both sectorally and at the macro-economic level."

The report said the effects were likely to be greater and more observable in South Africa than other African countries, partly because of the greater availability and range of public services and the government's determination to extend these.

Projections suggest almost a quarter of South Africa's population will be infected by 2010, slashing life expectancy to 48 years from the 68.2 years anticipated without the epidemic.

Around three million South Africans are currently infected with the human immunodeficiency virus of a sub-Saharan total of 22.5 million, which is 95 per cent of total infections world-

wide.

Almost 1,600 people are infected daily in South Africa on average.

Economists have estimated the disease could wipe several percentage points off economic growth over the coming years.

The UNAIDS/UNDP report said the spread of the disease in the country was compounded by poverty, mass unemployment, stigmatisation and secrecy, and threatened development and democracy four years after the end of apartheid.

"In South Africa today, HIV/AIDS threatens to reverse progress in human development and the promotion of a representative and participatory democracy," it said.

"The spread of HIV and AIDS in South Africa is fuelled by the apartheid legacy of the migrant labour system, the accompanying spread of sexually transmitted diseases and the subordinate status of women."

The report said South Africa had to recognise the causal relationship between poverty and the spread and impact of the disease and put into place plans to address the damage to labour supply and productivity if it was to protect its economy.

South Africa's Deputy President Thabo Mbeki in October launched a national programme bringing together trade unions, business and civil society groups to try to fight the epidemic.

IAEA chief urges N. Korea to allow access to suspect nuclear facility

SEOUL (AFP) — The chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Monday urged North Korea to allow access to an underground facility suspected of being used to revive its nuclear weapons programme.

President Kim Dae-jung said the situation was complex, unlike the case in Iraq, where the IAEA had a thorough grip on the problem.

"There is a need to clarify what the underground facility is, and we should be able to examine it through dialogue with North Korea," ElBaradei was quoted by presidential officials as saying during a meeting with President Kim Dae-jung.

He said North Korea's situation was complex, unlike the case in Iraq, where the IAEA had a thorough grip on the problem.

"The best solution is to use dialogue to get the North Koreans to open up

(its facility)," he said.

North Korea is under pressure to allow access to its new underground site in Kumchangni near Yongbyon, spotted by U.S. intelligence satellites, amid mounting fears the Stalinist state is reviving its nuclear programme.

North Korea has angrily rebuffed demands by the United States for access, describing the complex as a "civil underground structure."

It has also insisted it would only allow the inspection if Washington

paid compensation.

U.S. officials said North Korea has asked for millions of dollars, perhaps as much as \$300 million, to allow a U.S. inspection of the suspect complex.

The United States has told North Korea a 1994 nuclear agreement could be scrapped unless it opens up the Kumchangni site to inspections.

Under a 1994 agreement, the United States promised to supply light water reactors and fuel oil to North Korea in return for a freeze on its nuclear programme.

NASA's first space station had more amenities than new one will

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (AP) — NASA's first space station, Skylab, had more perks 25 years ago than its new one will offer at the turn of the millennium.

Prime rib or lobster Newburg for dinner? Skylab's freezer stocked both.

Want to work off those big meals? Skylab's main chamber was so spacious astronauts ran laps like hamsters on a wheel.

Need to clean up after the workout? No problem. Skylab had a shower.

Newer is not always better, say the men who called Skylab home in 1973 and 1974.

"We had a great space station," boasts Joe Kerwin, 66, a retired Navy doctor who flew on Skylab's first crew.

"I think the volume and the outfitting of that workshop will be the envy of the crews that fly on the international space station. Their modules are smaller. They're more cramped."

Astronauts and cosmonauts on the international space station will have to settle for canned and freeze-dried food, at least early on. Until a real kitchen is launched at the end of the five-year construction period, their refrigerator-freezers will be filled with blood, urine and other science samples.

They'll have to settle for a stationary cycle and tread-

mill.

No off-the-wall track or romp room.

And they'll have to settle for sponge baths. No shower.

"But on the other hand," Kerwin notes, "this thing is computerised. It has 10 times the power. It has the capabilities and underpinnings to do a great deal more science and engineering research, and I applaud it for all of that."

Space shuttle Endeavour is scheduled to blast off before dawn Thursday with the second part of the space station, a connecting passageway called Unity. A power and propulsion module named Zarya, Russian for sunrise, was launched Nov. 20 from Kazakhstan.

The Endeavour crew will use the shuttle's robot arm to join the two station pieces. A pair of spacewalking astronauts will then hook up electrical connections and data cables between the compartments, attach antennas and install tools and handrails for future visitors.

Three spacewalks are planned for this mission; over the next five years, 159 more will be needed to assemble and maintain the sprawling outpost.

By contrast, 11 spacewalks were performed during the three Skylab missions, which lasted one month, two months and three months. The last was a U.S. space endurance

record that stood until NASA astronauts began flying to Russia's Mir space station in 1995. Astronaut Shannon Lucid holds the U.S. record for her six months on Mir in 1996.

Skylab, a prototype space station meant to fill the gap between the Apollo moon landings and shuttle flights, required a single launch for assembly.

The 78-tonne cylinder was the modified third stage of a Saturn 5 moon rocket that carried it into orbit in May 1973. The first three-man crew arrived 11 days later, and the third and last crew departed in February 1974. Abandoned and deteriorating, Skylab plunged through the atmosphere in flames in 1979.

The 500-tonne space station will need 45 launches to assemble all the pieces in orbit. NASA's shuttles will do most of the heavy lifting.

Bill Pogue, a 68-year-old retired Air Force colonel who flew on Skylab's final mission, calls the assembly schedule "formidable. ... We just keep our fingers crossed and hope it all goes."

Ed Gibson shares his former crewmate's scepticism. "No one will be happier than me if it all goes off without a hitch," says Gibson, 62, now an aerospace consultant. "But if I were a betting man, I wouldn't put good odds on it."

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Completing the circle

THERE ARE many ways that Israel can end its occupation of south Lebanon, and the death of its soldiers and bring calm to its northern borders. One way, the Israeli left and many Israeli generals and mothers maintain, is to just leave the security zone. This unconditional withdrawal is also an international demand as prescribed in Security Council Resolution 425. Another way of leaving Lebanon, albeit a longer one, is to engage Syria in negotiations that would lead to simultaneous settlements on both the Lebanese and Syrian fronts. According to Israeli reports Syrian President Hafez Assad has expressed desire to resume negotiations with Israel leading to that end.

However, despite urging from the Israeli opposition and many generals and the public, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his inner cabinet seem to be determined to stay in that country despite the heavy toll on the Israeli army. Some Israeli ministers are even calling for tougher action against the Lebanese people — actions that involve attacking water and electricity supplies.

If Israel would accept to restart peace talks with Damascus at the point they reached during late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's reign in 1996, as Syria demands, the remaining fronts in the peace process in the Middle East stand a good chance of coming to a resolution in a relatively short time. Without completing the circle of peace in the region, the peace process would remain incomplete and fraught with dangers. Otherwise, Israel has to reckon with two basic choices, either to pull out from southern Lebanon unconditionally or stay put and risk an outbreak of more armed conflict in the area. We have every reason to believe that unilateral withdrawal from the strip of land that Israel occupies in southern Lebanon would halt Hizbollah military activities. The Lebanese army is on record as saying it will take responsibility for security in south Lebanon. Israel must put to the test this posture if it wants peace on its northern border. If Israel seeks, however, in exchange for total peace, a wider peace and a more complete peace, it must seek an accommodation with Damascus as soon as possible. If Rabin was willing to live in peace with Syria on the basis of a complete Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders, we cannot see why Netanyahu cannot do the same. After all, Rabin was also a military man and a "hero" of many Israeli wars. If the late prime minister saw no risk to his country's security by agreeing to vacate the Golan Heights, Netanyahu must do the same.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'IS Mu'nis Razaz said that Israel's only escape from its critical situation in south Lebanon is a unilateral withdrawal. He said if hardline Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu orders a military attack on Lebanon, it will be the end of his career as Israeli premier. Lebanon was a graveyard for both now-foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, (former Israeli prime minister) who was forced to stay out of sight for nearly a decade and Shimon Peres also lost the battle in Lebanon. Any Israeli decision to target Lebanon's infrastructure will not force Hizbollah fighters to retreat or minimise their activities, said the writer. Peres earlier tried the option of war with Lebanon but the world flared up against him and thus he failed to destroy Hizbollah, added Razaz. During that attack Hizbollah was backed by some Lebanese forces.

AL DUSTOUR'S Abu Yazan commented on the positive impact of Israel's decision to allow some Jordanian products into the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) areas. The decision will reflect positively on all the Kingdom's industry because the Palestinian areas could be one of Jordan's biggest trading partners. The writer said that the Palestinian areas provide better conditions for Jordanian products. The close relation between the two makes the flow of goods easier and more feasible, he said. Palestinian consumers are familiar with Jordanian products and Jordanian businessmen understand the needs and tastes of Palestinian markets, added the writer. Moreover, the close relation between the two makes it easier to facilitate trade exchange, he said. The writer expressed hope that the Israeli government would facilitate trade between the PNA areas and Jordan as quickly as possible.

A human rights renaissance?

By Bradford K. Smith

For most of the world's people, the rights articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are more of an aspiration than a reality.

Consider, for instance, the millions of Rwandans who were the victims of a genocide that, in its early stages, was overlooked by the world community. Consider, too, the 1.3 billion people who survive on less than \$1 a day, the 35,000 children who die each day from the effects of poverty, or the millions of women who suffer from the violence of war or domestic abuse.

To speak of a "human rights renaissance" in the face of such adversity may seem overly optimistic. Yet even in the darkest moments, the human spirit searches for signs of hope. And there are such signs.

Much progress has been achieved since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948. Colonialism and apartheid have been largely eradicated throughout the globe. The movement for gender equality has transformed nearly every society in the world — improving the lives of both women and men. Human rights advocacy has emerged in virtually every country and, increasingly, the community of nations has come to understand that the human rights problems of one country must be the concern of all.

The Ford Foundation's commitment to human rights can be traced to the mission outlined by its trustees in the early 1950s — to serve the public welfare, advance economic well-being, and strengthen democratic institutions. Grants were given to help victims of war and repression, to promote intellectual freedom and respect for the rule of law, and to reduce poverty and inequality between rich and poor countries. An important part of this early work was support for the American civil rights movement, work that was subsequently broadened to address discrimination and violations of human rights based on gender and national origin.

Today, the foundation's commitment to human rights remains central to the aims of our mission statement — to strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty and injustice, promote international cooperation, and advance human achievement. In its reorganisation in 1996, the foundation recommitted its resources to the global fight for justice and human rights.

This special edition of the Ford Foundation Report highlights some of the most promising developments in the human rights field, showcases efforts to make human rights more than an aspiration, and celebrates success stories as a way to inspire hope.

At the global level, the human rights machinery of the United Nations seems to be gaining momentum under the leadership of Mary Robinson, former presi-

dent of Ireland and now U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights. As you will see in her comments in this issue, Robinson has a clear vision of how to strengthen the international community's commitment to human rights and also how to make them relevant to the lives of the world's 5.8 billion people across the North-South divide. In recent months, the International Criminal Court was created to redress crimes against humanity. The impetus for such a court arose in the aftermath of World War II and the horrors of the Holocaust. Human rights advocates throughout the world — particularly the Foundation-supported Coalition for an International Criminal Court — kept this idea alive, both propelling and monitoring efforts toward its realisation.

Perhaps most important, we have witnessed a global movement toward gender equality. Advocates for women's rights have brought new vigour to the human rights movement, breaking down artificial distinctions between economic and political rights and the public and private spheres.

At the national level, signs of hope are found in the emergence of thousands of human rights groups around the world. They have brought new voices and fresh perspectives, and they have helped shape priorities. Only 20 or so years ago, human rights organisations were located mainly in Europe and North America.

Today, the human rights community spans the globe. At the regional level, there have also been developments that link the international system to local advocates. In Africa and the Middle East, foundation staff members have made human rights a priority by exploring ways to strengthen regional groups like the African Commission on Human and People's Rights. Another example can be found in Latin America, where grantees like the Centre for Justice and International Law are improving the workings of the inter-American human rights system. At the local level, activists are finding ways to make human rights relevant to people's daily lives. This is perhaps most challenging in the United States, which espouses strong international positions on the subject but rarely views its domestic issues through a human rights lens. As the article on the history of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights points out, the United States played an important role in creating the declaration. Eleanor Roosevelt, a primary force behind its ratification, considered it one of her greatest achievements. Yet, this history is largely unknown or forgotten. Similarly, the relevance of international human rights law for domestic issues remains virtually unexplored. Human Rights USA, a grass-roots effort that applies international legal standards to such domestic issues as

racism, xenophobia, and poverty, represents an important force for changing the situation.

Finally, this issue calls attention to developments on the conceptual level, to show that the idea of human rights continues to evolve. Ideas, concepts, and institutions are constantly being introduced. In the human rights context, this can be seen in the emerging interest in economic, social, and cultural rights. Advocates like those profiled in South Africa and Nigeria are emphasising these rights as well as continuing their long-standing concern for civil and political rights. Here, too, institutions have been created to fund new vision. For example, the International Council on Human Rights Policy, established in 1997 and with the contributions of human rights activists throughout the world, represents a new generation of human rights non-governmental organisations.

Whether or not these developments add up to the beginning of a "human rights renaissance," we believe that they are signs of hope that should inspire all of us to work for a better world. They also remind us that progress is being made in securing the universal rights of all people.

— The writer is the Ford Foundation's Vice President, Peace and Social Justice Programme.

The other great divide

By Gwynne Dyer

Why does half the world drive on the left, and the other half on the right? At last, the answer to this burning question is within reach.

"We do not know which side of the road the Romans drove on. There just isn't enough evidence either way," said Catherine Jones, expert on Roman archaeology at the British Museum, last month. But Bryn Walters of the Association for Roman Archaeology says he does know, and his argument is very persuasive. They drove on the left.

Though the straight roads built by the Roman empire still define the routes of many modern roads in Europe and the Middle East, they have been rebuilt so many times over the past 2000 years that little original material remains. And since Latin literature did not go in for stories about the lives of cart-drivers, which side they drove on was unknown — until this year, when Walters found the track into the old Roman quarry at Blunsdon Ridge.

The track was only used for bringing stone from the quarry to a major Roman temple being built on the nearby ridge (near Swindon in England), and then fell out of use, so it is very well preserved. And since the carts went in empty and came out laden with stone, the ruts on one side of the road are much deeper than they are on the other. The conclusion: Romans drove on the left.

Why they chose to drive on the

left remains a mystery. Perhaps it dated back to earlier times when travellers on horseback preferred to keep to the left when encountering strangers, so that their sword-hand was free in case of a problem. (Most people everywhere are right-handed.) But at least as far back as Roman times, it seems clear, wheeled traffic in most of Europe and the Mediterranean world kept to the left.

So why does all of Europe (except the British Isles), all of the Western hemisphere (except some former British possessions in the Caribbean), and all of the Middle East drive on the right? That seems to be Napoleon's fault.

In the long Dark Age after the fall of the Roman empire, and even in the Middle Ages, there would not have been much need for the drive-left rule, since what little wheeled traffic there was travelled mostly on narrow tracks. But when you met somebody else on those narrow tracks both parties had to veer either left or right, and in that sense the Roman rule seems to have survived: mostly, people swung out to the left.

In early modern Europe, with the volume of road traffic rising steadily, the old Roman custom of driving on the left was the likelier candidate to become the new legal standard — as it did in Britain, in Sweden, and in various other places that Napoleon never reached. But wherever the French emperor's armies invaded, they imposed a new rule: driving on the right. Why?

Napoleon never said, and subsequent historians have mumbled half-explanations about his need to impose discipline on European road traffic so that his armies could get through. But why did he go against the existing custom, frequently ignored though it undoubtedly was, and impose driving on the right? Probably precisely because driving on the left was the custom. Napoleon was a product of the

'Driving right is no more rational than driving left, but it is more 'revolutionary'. That would have appealed to Napoleon...'

French Revolution (however far he was from the ideals of the original revolutionaries), and the whole ethos of the revolution was about the breaking of the old rules and the creation of a new,

rational world. The year 1789 became Year One of the new era, and even the months were renamed.

Driving right is no more rational than driving left, but it is more 'revolutionary'. That would have appealed to Napoleon — and since his armies went everywhere from Russia to Spain, almost all of mainland Europe ended up driving on the right. (The Swedes finally gave up and switched a couple of decades ago.)

That meant that all the Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the Americas also ended up driving on the right. So did the infant United States, presumably because it felt closer to fellow-revolutionaries in France than to the former British oppressor.

Even British North America (now Canada) eventually switched to the right, because it made no sense to drive on different sides of the road along the world's longest land frontier. And the Middle East drives right because the Ottoman empire, which used to rule most of the region, was heavily under the influence of the right-driving French and Germans at the critical time when its army laid down formal traffic rules in the latter half of the 19th century.

But in most of sub-Saharan Africa, except for former French colonies, people drive on the left because of the British influence. They do the same in almost all the countries from Pakistan and India to Australia and New Zealand: only ex-French Indochina and the Philippines,

an ex-U.S. colony, drive right.

Even Indonesia (which was briefly occupied by the British two centuries ago) and Thailand (which was never colonised at all) drive on the left. So does Japan, though nobody seems to know whether this is due to 19th-century British influence, or whether it is as deeply-rooted in Japan as it was in post-Roman Europe.

Korea now drives right, but only because it passed directly from Japanese colonial rule to American (and Russian) influence at the end of the Second World War. And I just don't know why China now drives right, or if it ever drove on the left.

The metric system, the other great standardisation that we inherited from the French revolution, has become the global norm. Only the United States (and Britain, at least where road signs are concerned) still stick with the old English measures. But by making the "wrong" side his standard, Napoleon has left us a world permanently divided between countries that drive right (about 3.5 billion people) and those that drive left (about 2.5 billion).

Napoleon was a great admirer of the Roman army. If only he had known which side the Romans drove on, it might all have been different.

— The writer is an independent London-based journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries.

LETTERS

To the editor:

I HAVE lived in this country for many years and, in light of recent experiences I am wondering what is happening to Jordanian society.

To name a couple, on the eve and day of His Majesty King Hussein's birthday: Did road traffic regulations go out of the window? From the evening of the 13th throughout the whole of the next day, in Amman, where I live, apart from the roads being impassable, we were bombarded with the sound of shooting, speeding cars and screeching tyres. Presumably the police did not appear to intervene because this is the way that youngsters celebrate His Majesty's birthday.

Two days later on a trip to Petra with some friends, we decided to go to a circuitous route. On entering one town we encountered a group of young men and boys standing in the street clapping and singing. Our immediate reaction was that they were celebrating King Hussein's birthday. All of a sudden, our two cars were surrounded by this mob, which is all I can call them. They started jumping on the bonnets, groping through the open windows, opening the car doors and spitting.

I was under the impression that Jordan needed tourists. However, it might be advisable for the Ministry of Tourism to issue a health warning: "Do not get off the beaten track."

In the light of the above two incidents perhaps it might have been more decorous for these young people to have gone to the mosque or church and prayed for His Majesty's recovery and safe return to his people.

— Ann Hashem

To the editor:

I HAD the chance to read the three letters in the

Jordan Times concerning schools and teachers. The third letter was not an exact response to the first and second letters.

In the second letter the writer didn't label "all teachers" as irresponsible. She clearly meant that if any teacher leaves a school in the middle of the academic year without prior notice, leaves her classes unattended or works for another school right away, that this kind of teacher is irresponsible.

The last letter was not exactly a response to the first two letters and brought up other good issues that were not mentioned in the first two letters.

— Shoushan Makamian

To the editor:

IT'S ALWAYS a pleasure to read the Jordan Times as I did when I lived and worked in Amman from 1982-89. It is refreshing to see Jordanians awakening to some very real concerns, whether it may be as simple as "saving the trees" or as serious as recognizing the abuse of housemaids and the need for some legislature to correct this horrendous crime.

I still read very little about child abuse, domestic violence and inequality. Western countries too suffer from those societal ailments. The difference is that they are identified, discussed in public and hopefully the way the subject is treated will some day eliminate the problem. What is Jordan, as a country, doing to help eradicate child

abuse, domestic violence and inequality? How does the average Jordanian feel about those subjects? What can be done to bring those "hidden secrets" out into the light once and for all?

I would like also to address inequality in the workplace. When I worked in Jordan, there were two "working classes": One was that of the "expats" and the other was that of the "locals." Foreign women married to Arab men were considered "local" because, although they carried American passports they were married to Arab men. "Expats" were foreign nationals (mostly British) who had been hired either from the U.K., Jordan or a third country. Locals were paid a third of an expat's salary. "Expats" also received housing, transportation and travel allowances, although both performed the same job, teaching the same subjects.

This created discontent, low morale and frustration among faculty members. This practice still takes place in the school where I worked as well as in many other Jordanian institutions and businesses. Do Jordanians believe that the work of a foreigner with no ties to the country or its people is more valuable than that of a Jordanian (or someone married to a Jordanian)? Will there ever be legislature in place to guarantee equality in the workplace?

— Marina Rashid
 pines55@hotmail.com

Corrections

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I'm Barbie, buy me

Barbie was inspired by a pin-up doll adults would buy at tobacconists. Now, as she approaches 40, queen-pin of an empire that sells three of her every second, you don't hear much about that, nor about her camp followers.

By Dea Birkett

First, I CUT off her long flaxen hair. Then, I pierced her sky-blue eyes, until the needle emerged on the other side of her squishy, putty-coloured head. Her perfect row of pearl-white teeth begged to be blackened with a pencil. Then, once her head was mutilated, I removed it from the stiff column of her neck. Without a face, her decapitated frame was barely recognisable as human. It was useless. You couldn't build anything out of it, even if you had several of them. The plastic was too cold to cuddle. It couldn't even stand up on its own. I began to twist each overlong leg out from its socket.

Then I discarded the bits of body into the bin.

As a child, I liked to torture Barbie. I didn't do this to any of my other dolls, with their bulbous limbs and larval bodies; I cradled them in the crook of my arm and tucked them under patchwork quilts in their pretend cots. But I enjoyed doing damage to Barbie. There was something about her spindly legs that made me want to pluck them out, like an insect's. I wanted to rearrange her into something else. I wanted to deconstruct her. Looking back, it would be comforting to claim that, as a girl, I was already deconstructing femininity. It would be intellectually pleasing to think that, by the time I was ten, I was already rebelling against the archetypal female form. But I don't think I was doing any of these things. I just think that I saw Barbie as someone I could victimise. My other dolls were clearly designed to be cherished. Their purpose was apparent.

But Barbie... well, anyone could do anything to Barbie.

Thirty years later, my daughter is dressing her in pink ballgowns with jodhpurs for underwear. It's the same doll, the same wide, vacant eyes with eyelashes halfway up her forehead, the same arched brows, the same unyielding body, the same famously impossible statistics (scaled up to real life, she'd be 39-18-33). This Barbie climbs into her scarlet Porsche Boxster convertible, opens the door of her Deluxe Dream House and rides up in her very own lift, before going outside to groom her Sweetie Walking Pony. My daughter has never dismembered her, or had desires to damage her in any way. She manoeuvres her around her miniature, rose-tinted world as if guiding a slightly simple older sister.

We all have our own relationship to Barbie. It took scores of designers to achieve such a tabula rasa in a doll, a face full of nothing that demands we make it into something. We project our dreams, our longings, our anxieties on to that face. MG Lord, American columnist and author of the controversial *Forever Barbie: The Unauthorized Biography Of A Real Doll*, says, "Barbie may be a universally recognised image, but what she represents in a child's inner life can be as personal as a fingerprint." Barbie's creator, Ruth Handler, explained: "I designed Barbie with a blank face, so that the child could project her own dreams of the future on to Barbie. I wanted the owner to create a personality for the doll." Each of us has a unique interpretation of who she really is.

The reason Talking Barbie has not been the success her manufacturer Mattel hoped she would be is because we each think we know how Barbie talks: we each want to control her conversation. When we pull a cord at the nape of her neck and she says, "Oh dear, what shall I wear to dinner?", "Help me fix my hair," or "I think I'll call Ken," we're disappointed. She's a ventriloquist's doll, and we are her masters; she must not be allowed to speak for herself.

The world's most popular doll is turning 40 next March. Age has not withered her, and the sexual and political revolutions of her four decades have washed off her impervious skin like water. She is this century's unchallengeable marketing success.

Every girl in Britain has an average of five Barbies. Almost five million Barbies live in this country. In America, there are more Barbies than there are American citizens. For her 30th birthday, New York Mayor Koch organised a massive party, renaming Fifth Avenue, Barbie Boulevard in her honour.

Mattel is planning nationwide celebrations for her 40th. In New York, a star-studded party is being planned at the annual Toy Fair, where she was first launched.

Yet Barbie started life not as the embodiment of middle-class suburban American values, but as a sex worker. In the Fifties, the Hamburg-based Bild newspaper ran a popular cartoon called Lilli. Lilli was a brash, near-naked gold-digger who wanted men for their money and gave something in return.

Her creators boasted that she dressed in outfits that made her "the star of every bar." In 1955, Lilli was launched as a doll - 11 1/2 inches of flesh-toned plastic, with a long, blond ponytail and almond-shaped eyes. She was mostly sold, not through toy stores, but tobacco shops. It was adult men, not children, who were supposed to part with their cash and buy her. She was a pin-up - if you wanted, a three-dimensional masturbatory model.

American businesswoman Ruth Handler spotted Lilli when she was on holiday with her family in Switzerland and brought three home with her. She was co-founder with her husband, Elliot, of the company Mattel Toys. Mattel was based in Hawthorne, California, the birthplace of another feted blonde, Marilyn Monroe. Ruth Handler had long wanted to make an adult doll for children, but had been told that the manufacturing, if possible, would be prohibitively expensive.

Lilli was living proof that it could at least be technically achieved.

Barbie was not born; she has never been young. Like Athena, the Greek goddess of art and craft, she sprung fully formed from her progenitor. And all the accoutrements of a natural birth were eradicated. When the first prototypes came back to Mattel's Californian headquarters from the Japanese factory where they were being made, the mighty breasts had sprouted nipples. These were carefully filed off, and the mutilated dolls returned for nippleless remodelling at the Japanese factory.

The point of Barbie-to-be's breasts was to be draped in designer clothes - flesh-toned screens for our fantasies, not for any useful or natural purpose. Despite her heritage, she had no vagina, just a Venus mound of perfectly smooth plastic. But, most surprisingly, she was not even allowed a belly button. All signs of human procreation were banished; if you are born, you must also die, and this doll was to be immortal. Handler named her after her own daughter, Barbara. But she was very similar to Lilli. In March 1959, Barbie was launched.

Barbie Number One, as she is now known, wore a black-and-white striped strapless swimsuit and black, high-heeled mule shoes. Her eyeliner was pasted on thickly in black, her eyebrows arched. She had gold loop earrings, scarlet nails and eyeglasses that looked as if they could fly away on their own. She was available in blonde or brunette.

She looked like a tart, and debuted at the 1959 New York Toy Fair.

Her instant success was not due to her body, but what came along with it. It soon became clear that what was important about Barbie was that she could be dressed up as anything. By the mid-Sixties, just a few years after her launch, Mattel was the biggest clothing manufacturer in the world with only one model. Barbie arrived as Commuter Set, Cheerleader, Garden Party, Dinner at Eight. By 1965, she was already in her first spacesuit long before real women went into orbit. She has been a Registered Nurse, Lunch Date, Tennis Anyone?, Rovin Reporter and, most recently, Dentist Barbie. There was nothing she might not become. Everything was in the outfit.

"We girls can do anything," was Mattel's much-hyped slogan for the Eighties. And Barbie became an astronaut and a racing car driver. Of course, we girls couldn't really do anything, and real-life women racing car drivers were still hounded from the track, but the unspoken but implicit code to the slogan was, "We could, if only we dressed the part." The 1986 Astronaut Barbie came with a clear plastic helmet, pink bodysuit and silver space lingerie. "I thought Barbie would dress if she were on the moon," said Carol Spencer, the outfit's designer. Nothing stood between us and success that the right

outfit couldn't sort out.

It's her role as a fashion model that has spawned the huge network of adult Barbie collectors. Now Mattel produces a collectors' range specifically with them in mind. There are Barbie collector clubs all over the world, with two major glossy magazines dedicated to them - Barbie Bazaar and Miller's. The Barbie Collectors' Club of Great Britain held this year's U.K. Barbie Convention in an echoey hall in central London. Seemingly sane adults paraded in Barbie outfits from the past. Julie Berk, the previous year's president, wore Silver Cage, a shimmering pink number. Barbie dolls with almost any pair of suggestive words before their name lined the hall: Bond Street Barbie, Dream Date Barbie, Sweet 16 Barbie, Sun Valley Barbie - some fetching more than £1,000. "NRFB" - collector-speak for never removed from the box - are the most valuable. But few appear like this. Their owners like to finger them. Ibrahim Israel has more than 250 Barbies at home. "If I come in and I feel stressed, I take out maybe six dolls, redo their hairstyles, change their outfits and put them back in - then I'm more relaxed," he says. "I know it makes them less valuable, but why do I have them if I can't touch them?" To these devotees, Barbie is anything and everything. Even her physical form can be remodelled and remade. Piles of vintage heads like faded gob-stoppers,



One of Barbie's reincarnations

mounds of loose arms, packets of odd shoes are unashamedly rifled through for the perfect missing part that will make their vision whole.

Collector Ian Boulton gave a workshop on how to look after your doll. How should I dry her hair, asked one woman.

"With a blow-dryer, on a very low setting, and at least a foot away," replied Boulton confidently. And curling? "Use pipe cleaners and roll them up, like a perm roller, and pour over boiling water. Leave for about an hour, then dry with a blow-dryer to make the curls set." He reveals that her face can be literally wiped away with nail-polish remover and repainted, her full lips made thinner, her blue eyes turned brown. Twenty-year-old collector Nadine is clutching a Christian Dior Barbie that she's just bought with £95 of her student income. "She's been everything. She's gone everywhere. She's done everything, hasn't she? She can be everything I can't be," she says.

But to realise these dreams, you must own her.

A Barbie isn't something you borrow; it's something you buy.

Three Barbies are sold every second. James Paddock has more than 200. In his two-bedroom flat, which he shares with his partner, only Barbie has her own bedroom. He's just paid upwards of £100 for Illusion Barbie. "I thought she was beautiful. I just saw her and had to have her. Now she's mine." Barbie always belongs to somebody. She is the ultimate consumerist toy - a malleable woman all of your own.

Barbie is a worldwide phenomenon - sometimes called Barbie, sometimes something else. There's Black Barbie, Asian Barbie, Barbie's Hispanic friend, called Teresa. Recently, Barbie has acquired a disabled friend called Becky. She's just like Barbie, except she has joints in her knees so that she can sit in her wheelchair. Sadly, Becky cannot visit her friend, because her wheelchair won't fit into Barbie's dream house.

Briefly, it seemed that Barbie's stare might be directed away from her half-a-million individual owners' eyes. In 1961, Barbie

was introduced to Ken. Ruth Handler argued strongly for "a little bump" for Ken, but claims that men in the marketing team vetoed even a hint of anything below his belt.

Ken - who was named after Ruth Handler's son - is a passive male. Every year since he's arrived on the scene, Barbie has bought a new wedding dress. But she has never been, and never will be, a bride. Ken's purpose, ironically, appears to be to suppress any suggestion that she might be having sex. The newly muscled Earring Magic Ken of 1993 looked right out of Castro, San Francisco's gay district. It's fitting that Barbie's lifelong companion is gay. One of her many possible personae is the archetypal fag hag.

Keeping a good sexual fantasy down in Barbie land has proved impossible, even for the now-mighty Mattel. Look up Barbie on the Internet, and there are likely to be as many porn sites as collectors' forums - Barbie XXXRated, Cum See Barbie, Barbie Adult Fucking Playhouse. It's as if her past as Lilli is coming back to haunt her. Her biographer Lord points out, "Lilli wasn't just a symbol of sex, she is a symbol of illicit sex." It's true to say that the only thing rigid Barbie can do with her legs is open them. The fact that she looks like a cheerleader is part of her pornographic appeal. Parity is a hot commodity in the sex industry. "What were those Mattel people thinking?" says cultural critic Courtney Weaver. "They surely must have known that this female icon they were pushing on little girls was in actuality the male ideal of a whore?" But if Mattel was aware of any sexual innuendo in its doll, it is determined that no one else is. Although Barbie's heritage is a pin-up, this is a family secret that is kept in the closet. Mattel protects its progeny from her own past: when the Barbie twins - two women with hugely exaggerated breasts - posed for Playboy in 1991, the company's legal threats forced them to change their name. They are now known as the Barbi twins.

Mattel may be mighty, but it feels compelled to use its international power against even the most insignificant usurper. Joanne Crockett is an exotic dancer who plays the Canadian strip bars and nightclubs under her nickname, Barbie Benson. Her friends have called her Barbie since she was a kid, because she's tall with long, blond hair. She does a comedy act, playing, among other things, Monica Lewinsky with a big rubber puppet Clinton. She is nude, and the act is naughty, but no one would call it obscene. She has an adults-only website from which she now earns a good proportion of her income. She is now getting on for an exotic dancer - she's 34 - and hopes soon to retire from the stage and go back to school on the proceeds from the website.

But a few weeks ago, Joanne received a fat envelope from Mattel's lawyers in New York. "It was kinda like - how did they find me?" she says. "I don't know how they decided to pick on me." Her domain name on the web is barbiebenson.com.

Mattel claims that the use of her own nickname infringes the Barbie trademark. The company demanded that Crockett sign over her domain name to Mattel within 14 days. "They included these pages from a domain registry company with all the names filled in - their's and mine - as if I was just going to sign the papers and mail it back!" says Crockett. "I bought my domain. It cost me thousands of dollars. I've worked really hard at it. I want to go back to school. I wasn't just going to hand it over to them." Mattel's lawyer's filing cabinets are full of cases such as Crockett's. It's as if each use of a name that once could belong to any girl is felt by Mattel as an insult to its vulnerable daughter, as if Barbie herself could feel it.

And her parental company is an unforgiving family. Anyone, however, unthreatening and ultimately powerless, who dares to take the doll-god's name in vain will have the heavy hand of Mattel's legal team come down on them. Mattel's eagerness to keep Barbie pristine and virginal, her image as untainted as her impenetrable body, has led to threats against endeavours that are purely artistic. Web artist Mark Napier launched the "Distorted Barbie" website with the purpose of examining the meaning of what is, after all, an international icon.

image.

Mattel managed to shut him down.

To reproduce the 1986 Andy Warhol portrait of Barbie, you must not only have permission from Warhol's estate, but also from Mattel. Never was a girl better taken care of. "What I do in my job, first and foremost, is protect Barbie," says Mattel's chief executive, Jill Barad.

Surprisingly for a company that is so profitable, considerations other than commercial seem to play a significant factor in deciding whose company Barbie is allowed to keep. The Barbie Collectors' Club of Great Britain's newsletter - a throw-together affair of stapled A3 sheets - now goes under the innocuous and totally futile name of Fashion Editor, in order not to offend Mattel. When the club itself was

featured in a commercial, Mattel insisted that no men - who make up a substantial part of the membership - appear. It didn't want Barbie's camp following to be outed.

Mattel may see its child as the victim of our own fantasies. But some claim that it is the other way around; that we are Barbie's victims. Some argue that this 11 1/2 inch tall plastic doll has contributed to us being anorexic, fashion-obsessed bimbos. At the 1972 New York Toy Fair, women handed out leaflets accusing her of encouraging girls "to see themselves as mannequins, sex objects or housekeepers". A town in Vermont has banned her. At Christmas 1993, the Barbie Liberation Organisation sabotaged toy shops, swapping the voice boxes of Talking Barbie and GI Joe, and parents inadvertently bought their children Barbies who squawked, "Vengeance is mine!" and Joes who simpered, "Let's go shopping." Many toy libraries in Britain refuse to stock her. Never has a 40-year-old woman been held responsible for harming so many.

It is true that Barbie has never been a radical. She strode confidently through the Seventies as if there were no women's movement, no Burn Your Bra, however massive your mammary glands. While I had a poster in my student digs screaming, "Heels may be in fashion - but we won't wear them," Barbie tiptoed through the radical decade unable even to stand up without her stilettos. Modest nods to changing attitudes were made by Mattel. MG Lord identifies 1971 as when the most significant modification was made to Barbie's body. Until then, her eyes had glanced downwards and to the side, much like those of the late Princess Diana, our most recent real-life Barbie. In 1971, her heavy lashes turned upwards. She began to look us straight in the eye.

Barbie has always been attributed with conservative tastes. In 1987, a Canadian newspaper polled its readers to find out Barbie's favourites, as if she really existed. The readers voted: *Gone With the Wind* as her all-time favourite film. And only those outfits that are socially acceptable in the middle-class suburbs ever make it into Barbie's wardrobe. Her favourite shop might well be British Home Stores.

When Barbie's body and face were changed last year to much fanfare (shorter eyelashes, a broader jaw and a closed mouth, so removing all hint of oral sex), one reason was to accommodate hipsters, which would have fallen off her previously shrunken bottom. But this cosmetic plastic surgery was performed after hipsters had reached the peak of teenage fashion - Barbie is a follower of fashion, not an innovator.

Nevertheless, the Daily Telegraph thought it a significant enough cultural event to devote an editorial to the subject. If Barbie had ever been allowed to grow old, I imagine her maturing into Margaret Thatcher - strident, well turned-out, with an abundance of hair. But all this projection is an entirely one-way affair. We may love, hate or torture Barbie, but she doesn't give a stuff about us. Barbie doesn't care who we are or how we treat her. She will let us do anything with her minuscule, moleless body. She doesn't care if she is adored or disembowelled. She smiles up at my daughter, just as she once smiled up at me. She has hardly reacted to us in the four decades since she was born. Her expression has changed so little. She stares blankly into our eyes whoever we are, whatever age, whatever sex, whatever sexuality. To her, we're just people who've bought her. No whore could be more accommodating. No girl could give us more than Barbie.

- This article is reprinted from the Guardian

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Budget for '99 will focus on capital spending — Tarawneh

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh Monday said the draft law for the 1999 state budget, which will be submitted to the Parliament "soon," will focus on capital spending.

Tarawneh, who gave no details about the proposed budget, said the growth rate recorded by the government will fall below the expectations of the economic readjustment programme.

Initial predictions of international monetary institutions indicated at the beginning of this programme, launched in the early 90s, that growth rates will range from five to six per cent of the gross domestic product before the end of this decade.

Official figures this year showed growth rates in 1997 and 1996 were far below these expectations. The revelation raised a stir in the Kingdom's business community.

"The growth rate [this

year] will not meet the expectations we used to talk about, namely five or six per cent, but it will be positive, God willing," the premier told reporters.

"There is a slow down in the growth rate due to internal and external reasons... but we cannot say that there is a strong recession in most of the sectors," Tarawneh added.

He said his government found capital spending by previous governments was "weak" because of domestic and regional reasons and the crisis in the international markets.

Tarawneh said the new draft budget includes "positive signs," especially in the construction and industrial fields. He did not elaborate.

Finance Minister Michel Marto said this week that the state budget, which will focus on the eradication of poverty and infrastructure, will exceed JD2 billion.

Marto indicated that the expected deficit in the 1999 budget will be less than the deficit envisaged for the

current year, noting that all governorates will submit their own budgets before the government finalises its draft budget.

During his meeting with the press Monday, Tarawneh said high interest rates by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBI) were aimed at building up strong foreign reserves.

"The current high interest rate is a necessity to build such a reserve... all we do is enhance the reserve whether through internal borrowing as we did in the past two days or by enhancing exports," the premier said.

"Building such a reserve is very important before reconsidering the current interest rate," Tarawneh added.

He was referring to the \$110 million loan the government signed with a consortium of local commercial banks, which aimed among other things to enhance the foreign reserves at the CBI.

The premier reiterated

that he was supporting a customs exemption of the industrial production inputs, which might cost the public treasury not less than JD120 million.

"There is a government commitment in that regard. The problem is how we will compensate [the JD120 million]. These exemptions will activate the economic development process," he added.

The prime minister said the government will review the current bread prices, including the possibility of reducing them.

"There is an inclination to reconsider the bread prices in a comprehensive manner. We are discussing all the scenarios now," Tarawneh said, adding that a review of the issue is part of the government's inclination to fight poverty.

The decline in wheat prices on the international market was the major reason for the Cabinet's decision to reconsider the bread prices.

Lawzi tries to alleviate fears of Ma'an residents about privatisation of railway

By Ghadeer Taher

AMMAN — Transport Minister Nasser Lawzi headed to Ma'an Monday to drum up support for the privatisation of the indebted Aqaba Railway Corporation after 57 deputies demanded that negotiations be stopped.

Although Lawzi was unavailable for comment Monday evening on the outcome of the meeting, a deputy present at the meeting said the minister put his case forward to sceptical deputies and Senators, the chairman of the Railway Association of Workers, the head of the corporation and community leaders in a "relaxed" atmosphere, sources at the meeting told the Jordan Times.

The Aqaba Railway Corporation, with its headquarters in Ma'an, employs several hundred townspeople out of a total workforce of 1,300, mainly from the south.

"Lawzi explained the benefits of privatising the railway, and we told him of the fears the people of Ma'an harbour about granting the concession, especially the impact on employment," said a deputy, who attended the meeting.

"We do not think privatisation is the right approach and many of us think that the government underestimated the value of the assets of the corporation and did not get a good offer... the minister said he would relay our concerns to the Cabinet."

Deputies and Ma'anis have said they were concerned that privatisation would lead to layoffs, and would have a negative impact on the town's business.

The government and American defence and engineering giant Raytheon, working with American firms Wisconsin Central and General Electric, and Mitsubishi of Japan, CCC contractors of Greece, as well as the Amman-based Kawar group, began negotiations last month on a 25-year concession to operate and rehabilitate the railway.

The American-led consortium submitted the highest offer, JD20 million, for the concession and assets of the corporation in an open tender process. Officials and industry sources estimate that the planned expansion will eventually cost between \$100-\$120 million, to be paid by the conces-

sionaire.

Describing the railroad as Ma'an's lifeline, the southern city's mayor, in a memorandum to Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, urged the government to stop negotiations warning that if the railway is privatised it could trigger "another social explosion," alluding to riots in the south over price hikes of basic commodities.

"This project is the only lung from which the city of Ma'an could breathe," said Mousa Maani, saying

Ma'an is suffering from poverty and unemployment as a result of industry shut-downs or relocations.

The concession will include operation and maintenance of the Aqaba Railway Corporation, financing and construction of rail extensions to the Jordan Phosphates Mines Company, at Shidiyah and between Aqaba and the Aqaba industrial area (Wadi II) on a build, transfer and operate (BTO) basis.

Opponents of granting the concession claim that the corporation, which has a JD70 million debt that will be absorbed by the government, could carry out the extensions "at its own expense."

While the newly-built infrastructure will eventually revert to government ownership, the assets of the company will be on a build, own and operate (BOO) basis, according to ministry sources.

EFTA signs free trade deal with Palestinians

LEUKERBAD, Switzerland (R) — The four-nation European Free Trade Association (EFTA) signed a trade agreement with the Palestinian National Authority on Monday and formally launched talks on a similar pact with Egypt.

Trade ministers from the grouping — which links Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein — also hailed progress towards a free trade deal with Canada and are looking to start talks with Mexico, officials said.

The pact with the Palestinians, to go into force next July, was signed in Leukerbad by Swiss Economy Minister Pascal Couchepin, current chairman of the Geneva-based EFTA, and the Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) minister of economy and trade, Maher Masri.

The agreement provides for free trade in industrial goods, fish and other marine products as well as processed agricultural goods. EFTA, which accounts for 3.1 per cent of world trade, will also pro-

vide technical assistance in implementing the accord.

The two sides will also agree to review the deal once Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) have finalised the peace process between them.

For EFTA, founded in 1960 and once a rival to the old European Economic Community but now linked to the European Union (EU) through the European Economic Area, it is the 14th free trade agreement with a non-EU partner.

It signed a free trade accord with Israel in 1992 and also has full agreements with Morocco and Turkey, as well as with 10 ex-communist states in eastern Europe and the old Soviet Union.

EFTA officials recognise the deal with the Palestinians is not significant in terms of trade but they argue it will help the PNA establish its position as a trading partner and contribute towards the Middle East peace process.

The grouping, which once included six of the now 15

members of the EU, has a total trade turnover of some \$250 billion — or 54 per cent of its combined gross domestic product (GDP) — and includes three of the world's richest countries in per capita income.

After appearing doomed in the wake of the switch to the EU by Austria, Sweden and Finland four years ago, it has found a new lease of life in building links around the Mediterranean and looking further to the Middle East, North and South America.

There have already been two rounds of talks with Canada, the world's fourth trading power, and officials on both sides say they are progressing well. Couchepin is due to visit Ottawa next month to give further political impetus to the discussions.

Contacts are at a preliminary stage with Mexico, which last week held a first round of negotiations with the EU on a free trade pact. Couchepin was in Mexico City in October and is known to feel prospects for EFTA are also good.

Oil price falls to new 12-year low on OPEC inaction

LONDON (R) — World oil markets fell to another 12-year low on Monday as prices slid further in a delayed reaction to last week's OPEC meeting where oil producers failed to act to alleviate a global glut, traders said.

Benchmark Brent futures set a new 12-year low of \$10.46 a barrel on Monday following a weak open of the New York Mercantile Exchange, where light crude also traded at a new low of \$11.22 a barrel.

"We're slowly withering away here," an International Petroleum Exchange trader in London said.

Monday's levels were the lowest since 1986, when cash Brent briefly traded below \$9 a barrel. Adjusted for inflation, prices are at 25-year lows.

"I just can't get bullish on this market," a trader said. Kuwaiti Oil Minister Sheikh Saud Al Sabah said Saturday that he feared oil prices could slump to the \$5-\$7 a barrel level.

"I am afraid that oil prices will deteriorate in the coming months," he said on his return from Vienna where OPEC held its winter meeting.

Exchange Rates Monday, 30-11-98									
ACCESS 444888									
JORDAN DINAR	1.0000	0.1887	0.1827	1.8778	1.8387	0.1846	2.3328	0.2077	0.7000
BAHRAIN DHR	5.2884	1.0000	1.0210	9.9486	8.7424	1.0000	12.3620	1.0000	3.7618
U.A.E. DHAM	5.1883	0.9784	1.0200	8.7446	8.9416	1.0000	12.1062	1.0775	3.6945
BAHRAIN DHR	0.5325	0.1025	0.1028	1.0000	0.9782	0.1036	1.2434	0.1108	0.3770
QATAR RYAL	0.5439	0.1026	0.1048	1.0000	0.9544	0.1056	1.2688	0.1130	0.3801
KUWAIT DHR	5.1412	0.9703	0.9807	9.8544	8.4533	1.0000	11.9942	1.0678	3.6400
OMAN RYAL	0.4288	0.0809	0.0826	0.9049	0.7882	0.0834	1.0000	0.0880	0.3038
SAUDI RYAL	4.8145	0.9087	0.9278	8.0409	8.8525	0.9285	11.2520	1.0000	3.6900
LIBANON LRA	21.4831	4.0545	4.7359	40.3415	39.5014	4.1756	50.1186	4.4621	13.2100
IRI DOLLAR	1.4124	0.2688	0.2722	2.8523	2.5971	0.2747	3.2951	0.2934	1.0000
ALBANIAN LIRA	0.8544	0.1613	0.1648	1.8044	1.5710	0.1682	1.8033	0.1775	0.6048
GERMAN MARK	2.4154	0.4659	0.4655	4.5307	4.4412	0.4688	5.6300	0.5017	1.7001
SWITZERLAND FRA	1.9521	0.3780	0.3839	3.7408	3.6529	0.3875	4.6474	0.4758	1.6104
FRANCE FRANC	8.1017	1.5291	1.5312	15.2138	14.5908	1.5758	18.9028	1.6501	6.2500
JAPAN YEN	1.7475	0.3298	0.3287	3.2814	3.2131	0.3289	4.0787	0.3630	1.2372
HOLLAND GUILDER	2.7238	0.5141	0.5248	5.1150	5.0084	0.5286	6.3548	0.5958	1.9200
SWEDEN KORONA	11.5333	2.1767	2.2225	21.6577	21.2088	2.2433	26.9066	2.3855	1.6500
ITALY LIRA	23.9213	4.9148	4.8088	44.8203	43.9847	4.6528	55.8070	4.9888	18.3939
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	49.8305	9.4047	9.6028	99.5735	91.6246	9.8623	116.2515	10.3500	35.8000
NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR	2.2327	0.4214	0.4203	4.1827	4.0822	0.4213	4.8637	0.4837	1.8700
RUSSIAN RUBLE	4.0228	0.7687	0.7810	7.8105	7.4520	0.7863	9.4550	0.8415	2.8900
CYPRUS POUND	2.8782	0.5432	0.5547	5.4048	5.2923	0.5588	6.7148	0.5978	2.0578
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	17.0071	3.2088	3.2774	31.9365	31.2713	3.3080	39.6764	3.5324	12.9410
CANADA DOLLAR	2.1702	0.4096	0.4182	4.0753	3.9904	0.4221	5.0828	0.4508	1.6385
EURO	1.2278	0.2317	0.2366	2.2571	2.2038	0.2388	2.8838	0.2550	0.8901

MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DINAR									
CENTRAL BANK BULLETIN									
CURRENCY	1 JD	5 JD	10 JD	100 JD	1000 JD	10000 JD	100000 JD	1000000 JD	10000000 JD
US DOLLAR	1.0000	1.8831	0.5848	0.0700	0.1743	0.0083	0.5185	5.9045	1.1506
BAHRAIN DHR	0.0400	1.0000	0.2500	0.0250	0.1000	0.0025	0.0400	0.3718	0.0090
U.A.E. DHAM	1.7101	2.8270	1.0000	1.2125	0.2881	1.3822	0.8888	10.8972	0.0000
QATAR RYAL	1.7101	2.8270	1.0000	1.2125	0.2881	1.3822	0.8888	10.8972	0.0000
KUWAIT DHR	5.2884	9.9486	0.1887	0.0189	0.0019	0.0002	0.0019	0.0002	0.0000
OMAN RYAL	0.4288	0.8097	0.2328	0.0233	0.0023	0.0002	0.0023	0.0002	0.0000
SAUDI RYAL	4.8145	9.0877	0.2076	0.0208	0.0021	0.0002	0.0021	0.0002	0.0000
LIBANON LRA	21.4831	40.3415	0.4659	0.0466	0.0047	0.0005	0.0047	0.0005	0.0000
IRI DOLLAR	1.4124	2.6880	0.7071	0.0707	0.0071	0.0007	0.0071	0.0007	0.0000
ALBANIAN LIRA	0.8544	1.6130	0.1613	0.0161	0.0016	0.0002	0.0016	0.0002	0.0000
GERMAN MARK	2.4154	4.5307	0.4659	0.0466	0.0047	0.0005	0.0047	0.0005	0.0000
SWITZERLAND FRA	1.9521	3.7408	0.3780	0.0378	0.0038	0.0004	0.0038	0.0004	0.0000
FRANCE FRANC	8.1017	15.2138	1.5291	0.1529	0.0153	0.0015	0.0153	0.0015	0.0000
JAPAN YEN	1.7475	3.2814	0.3298	0.0329	0.0033	0.0003	0.0033	0.0003	0.0000
HOLLAND GUILDER	2.7238	5.1150	0.5141	0.0514	0.0051	0.0005	0.0051	0.0005	0.0000
SWEDEN KORONA	11.5333	21.6577	2.1767	0.2177	0.0218	0.0022	0.0218	0.0022	0.0000
ITALY LIRA	23.9213	44.8203	4.9148	0.4915	0.0492	0.0049	0.0492	0.0049	0.0000
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	49.8305	99.5735	9.4047	0.9405	0.0940	0.0094	0.0940	0.0094	0.0000
NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR	2.2327	4.1827	0.4214	0.0421	0.0042	0.0004	0.0042	0.0004	0.0000
RUSSIAN RUBLE	4.0228	7.8105	0.7687	0.0769	0.0077	0.0008	0.0077	0.0008	0.0000
CYPRUS POUND	2.8782	5.4048	0.5432	0.0543	0.0054	0.0005	0.0054	0.0005	0.0000
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	17.0071	31.9365	3.2088	0.3209	0.0321	0.0032	0.0321	0.0032	0.0000
CANADA DOLLAR	2.1702	4.0753	0.4096	0.0410	0.0041	0.0004	0.0041	0.0004	0.0000
EURO	1.2278	2.2571	0.2317	0.0232	0.0023	0.0002	0.0023	0.0002	0.0000

WORLD STOCK MARKETS									
STOCK MARKET	INDEX	CLOSING	LAST	CHANGE	STOCK MARKET	INDEX	CLOSING	LAST	CHANGE
FRANKFURT	DAX	5121.40	5051.83	-69.57	HONG KONG	HANG SENG	10742.11	10778.92	+36.81
NEW YORK	DJ INDEX	9323.08	9314.28	-8.80	NEW YORK	NYSE COMPOSITE	263.00	261.63	-1.37
NEW YORK	AMEX COMPOSITE	873.32	869.34	-3.98	NEW YORK	S&P 500	1182.20	1181.87	-0.33
TOKYO	NIKKEI 225	14883.70	14888.36	+4.66	PARIS	CAC 40	3915.53	3915.53	0.00
FRANKFURT	COMPOSITE	4648.70	4648.10	-0.60					

PRECIOUS METALS									
METAL	AMK	BB	METAL	AMK	BB	METAL	AMK	BB	METAL
GOLD	255.00	255.00	SILVER	4.90	4.90	PLATINUM	355.00	355.00	

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- Cease
- Garlic-basil sauce
- Perforation
- Decant
- For the birds?
- Wildly out of control
- Bohemian
- firm
- Knight's aide
- On dress letters
- Big house and big league guys?
- Anticipate
- Expire
- Landed estates
- Festooning
- Fervor
- Pile of snow
- Negative conjunction
- Hilo garlands
- From within
- Royale
- Country hotel
- Declare one's willingness
- Mad
- Throwaways
- Gave temporarily
- Santa winds
- Pitcher's location
- Both sides of an argument
- Paddle
- Orient
- Keaton or Lane
- Silent
- Arthur of tennis
- Sequence
- Resting on
- Herring's kin
- Bird homes
- Beliefs

DOWN

- Health resorts
- Bull of the Pampas
- Rejected and elected candidates?
- Meddle
- Vernacular
- Occurrence
- Centurion
- Olympian
- Lipinski
- Switch positions
- Occur
- Actor Shant
- Corporate image
- Just manages
- John Dickson or Vikki
- Gossip
- Courts
- Acid of apples
- Sports venue
- Comic Johnson and others

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Study finds Jordanian industries weak in adopting modern concept of marketing

****ALTHOUGH THERE IS** a relative variance in the extent of practising marketing activities between various productive sectors, a study prepared by the Royal Scientific Society has indicated that, in general, there is a weakness in adopting the modern concept of marketing. "This weakness could reflect negatively on the capability of the Jordanian industries to compete," the study said giving the following points as main findings:

- 1) The marketing tasks and activities in the Jordanian industries are still entrusted to departments or units that have no specialised administration. Some of the industries give the marketing responsibilities to the department of sales or production or even the department of finance. At other industries the marketing job is "scattered between a number of administrative units" or unspecified.
- 2) The absence of an administrative unit or section for a marketing information system at most of the productive sectors covered by the study. "This may increase the cost of taking wrong decisions which reflect negatively on the performance and capability of the industries to compete," the study said. It added that no more than 51 per cent of all industries surveyed were found to have a marketing information system especially those in the chemical sector, paper and cardboard industries and metal-work and machinery plants.
- 3) Weakness in conducting studies on the needs and aspirations of clients by most of the industries surveyed. The study found that no more than 35 per cent conduct such research.
- 4) Weakness in spending on studies and research as no more than 0.07 per cent of the industrialists interviewed were paying for such an item.
- 5) Weakness in pre-planning for promotional campaigns. According to the study, 71 per cent do not have any prior planning or preparation especially the small and medium-size industries. "The best among the planners are the wood and basic metal industries as well as the textiles sector."
- 6) Weakness in evaluating and reviewing promotional activities as 76 per cent do not conduct such a procedure. The rate is much higher among small industries.
- 7) Weak commitment by the industries to export activity as the rate of those which do not export at all stood at 70.8 per cent of the industries surveyed. Only eight per cent were found to have organised and well-planned export activity and 16 per cent to be irregular exporters.
- 9) Weakness in after-sales services such as erection, operation, transport and training especially by metal industries (Al Dustour).

Deutsche seals Bankers buy for \$10.1b

FRANKFURT (R) — Deutsche Bank AG said Monday it had sealed a takeover of Bankers Trust for \$10.1 billion in a deal creating the world's largest bank. The supervisory boards of both banks on Sunday approved a "definitive agreement" under which Deutsche will acquire all outstanding shares of the common stock of Bankers Trust at \$93 per share, Deutsche said in a statement. Deutsche, Germany's largest bank, said the acquisition would establish a "global platform for profitable growth." The German bank said it would finance the takeover partly through a capital increase of four billion marks. That is less than expected by analysts, many of whom had predicted Deutsche would raise at least half the purchase price by issuing equity. The statement said nothing about job cuts resulting from the deal which analysts said could amount to 2,000 or more at the combined group, mainly in New York and London. The remaining part of the purchase price will be financed with available liquid funds and by issuing various financing instruments such as participatory capital, bonds and convertible bonds or bonds with warrants on Deutsche's own shares and third-party shares. It was not immediately clear whether the reference to "third-party shares" means Deutsche may reduce its industrial shareholdings by issuing bonds convertible into such stock. Deutsche owns large stakes in major German corporations including DaimlerChrysler AG and builder Philipp Holzmann. Last week Deutsche said it had no plans to sell its stake of more than 10 per cent in DaimlerChrysler. The acquisition is subject to the approval of shareholders representing two thirds of all Bankers Trust shares and of U.S., European and German regulatory authorities. The two banks last Monday confirmed weeks of speculation that they were in acquisition talks. The deal will create a financial giant with more than \$800 billion of assets, consigning Union Bank of Switzerland to second place in the world league table. Market observers say the purchase will help Germany's largest bank fulfil its dream of a size-

Jordanian and Israeli phone firms try to settle dispute

By Ghadeer Taher

AMMAN — Jordan's phone company and Israel's Bezeq International held their first round of negotiations Monday to settle a dispute over a \$5 million bill, after the Jordan Telecommunications Corporation (JTC) cut direct links with the carrier. "We had a good meeting but we did not resolve the issue yet," said Ori Yogeve, chief executive officer of Bezeq International, a subsidiary of Israel's state-owned Bezeq Telecommunications Company. "We are trying to find a solution," said Yogeve. He said the two sides will meet in several days in Israel to continue their discussions. Officials from the Jordan Telecommunications Corporation were not available for comment Monday evening. "We do not owe JTC money," said Yogeve before heading to Amman. "We are trying to find a compromise, which does not only concern money but our future commercial relationship," said Yogeve, who was part of a four-man team, which included the chairman of the firm, Mosha Hava, for talks with JTC Chairman Ali Shukri. The JTC in September cut its direct link with Bezeq International

because it failed to pay a bill of \$5 million, according to JTC.

Shukri has been quoted in news reports as saying that Jordan was routing phone calls to Israel through a private Israeli firm, Golden Lines.

Yogeve, who said he is going to Jordan for negotiations at the invitation of the JTC, said the Jordanian carrier had broken a valid agreement when it disconnected computer data lines used by customers, who paid both the JTC and Bezeq International for the service.

"The JTC also cut voice traffic without giving us prior notice," said Yogeve, who said that his company is using third countries to route calls to Jordan, a common practice. Ad Dustour Arabic daily, quoting Shukri, reported Sunday that the JTC was taking legal action against the carrier.

"We do not think they have a case," said Yogeve. "We prefer to work together than sue each other...we are very secure in our position."

A.F.M. TRADE Monday, 30-11-98

ACCESS 4648888

Company Oper. Price Close Change

BANKS

ARAB BK	209,500	210,000	+0.24%
NTL BK	1,600	1,610	+0.63%
BEZEL BK	1,110	1,100	-0.90%
MIDDLE EAST BK	1,070	1,040	-2.80%
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THE HOUSING BK	2,750	2,750	0.00%
JOR KUNAFT BK	1,720	1,680	-2.33%
JOR GULF BK	1,760	1,770	+0.57%
JOR ISLAMIC BK	1,650	1,700	+0.59%
UNION BK	1,680	1,680	0.00%
JOR INVESTMENT BK	1,420	1,430	+0.70%
PHILADELPHIA BK	1,610	1,630	+1.24%

BANKS INDEX 275,700 point +0.16%

INSURANCE

GENERAL ARABIA INS	2,040	2,040	0.00%
AFAR INS	1,850	1,850	0.00%
AHLIA INS	1,600	1,600	0.00%

INSURANCE INDEX 125,620 point +0.00%

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JOR INTL TRADING CENT	0,300	0,310	+3.33%
COMMODITIES	0,330	0,330	0.00%
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JOR INTL FOR INVS &	1,900	1,910	+0.53%
UNIFIED LAND TRANS	1,120	1,140	+1.79%

SERVICES INDEX 101,910 point +0.21%

INDUSTRY

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ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL	2,500	2,510	+0.40%
CERAMIC IND	1,180	1,170	-0.85%
TORACCO & CIGARET	1,230	1,230	0.00%
JOR PIPES	1,070	1,070	0.00%
ARAB CHEMICAL DETER	3,540	3,540	0.00%
NTL STEEL	0,480	0,510	+6.25%
RAFA	0,320	0,360	+12.50%
DAR AL DAWA	1,910	1,920	+0.52%
MIDDLE EAST COMPLEX	0,550	0,550	0.00%
JOR STEEL	0,880	0,880	0.00%
ARAB ALUMINIUM	1,780	1,770	-0.56%
NTL IND	0,380	0,380	0.00%
PETRO - CHEMICAL	0,300	0,310	+3.33%
ROCKWOOL	0,330	0,330	0.00%
GENERAL INVS	0,300	0,300	0.00%
NTL CABLE	0,650	0,650	0.00%
SULPHUR - CHEMICALS	0,370	0,380	+2.71%
KAWTHER	0,410	0,410	0.00%
EL-ZAY	1,080	1,080	0.00%
UNIVERSAL MODERN IND	0,830	0,830	0.00%
IND. RESOURCES	0,400	0,410	+2.50%
NEW CAPES	0,600	0,610	+1.67%
NTL ALUMINIUM	0,720	0,720	0.00%

INDUSTRY INDEX 73,270 point +0.73%

PARALLEL

EXPORT BANKS	0,830	0,830	0.00%
JOR TRADING FACILITIES	0,380	0,380	0.00%
CENTRAL STORO	0,270	0,280	+3.70%
UNION INVS. CORP	0,650	0,660	+1.54%
AL-EKEL	0,780	0,780	0.00%
ADVANCED PHAR	0,630	0,630	0.00%
MEDICAL APPLIANCES	0,280	0,300	+7.14%
AL DAWLAH	0,570	0,570	0.00%
ARAB INTL. TRADE	0,280	0,280	0.00%
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READY MIX CONCRETE	0,780	0,780	0.00%
CENTURY	0,570	0,570	0.00%
NAMICO	0,270	0,280	+3.70%
TEXTILE & PLASTIC	0,240	0,250	+4.17%
MIDDLE EAST PHARM	0,640	0,650	+1.56%
AL-RAY	0,330	0,330	0.00%
INTL CERAMIC	0,430	0,430	0.00%
J.E.T.T.	1,000	0,990	-1.00%
NUTRI CAR	0,680	0,680	0.00%
ARAB JOR INVS	0,880	0,890	+1.14%

GRAND INDEX 165,16 point +0.28%

Poll: Pay cuts preferable to layoffs

HONG KONG (AFP) — Most business leaders across Asia believe asking workers to accept pay cuts is preferable to layoffs, except in Hong Kong where executives preferred to slash jobs, a poll has found. Sixty-one per cent of executives across the region said they would cut salaries rather than jobs, the joint poll by the Far Eastern Economic Review and CNBC Business News found. But in Hong Kong 49 per cent said they would prefer to cut staff, with only 40 per cent opting for reducing pay packages. The majority of managers across Asia — 71 per cent — also said they would be willing to give up their own bonuses if staff receive no pay increases. Executives also agreed that if staff had to be laid off as a result of the region's economic crisis, companies should offer employees help in finding new positions.

Foreign investors flee India markets

BOMBAY (AFP) — India's capital markets will suffer a net outflow of foreign portfolio funds in 1998, for the first time since New Delhi opened up the bourses six years ago, analysts have said. Figures released by the capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) showed foreign portfolio investors had pulled out \$32 million for the month to Nov. 20. Five other months this year have witnessed an outflow of foreign investment. "This is the first time in six years that annual foreign portfolio investment figures have turned negative," said Devesh Kumar, a foreign brokerage ABN AMRO Equities. Kumar estimated that India would end 1998 with a net foreign portfolio outflow of \$400 million. The previous low was a net inflow of \$827 million in 1993, while the best year was 1996 which saw an injection of \$3 billion.

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LOCAL SPORTS SCENE

Olympic soccer preliminaries still undecided

AMMAN — Contacts are continuing between the Jordan Football Association and the Saudi Soccer Federation to reach a formula to organise the preliminary round matches for the Sydney 2000 Olympic qualifiers. The issue at stake is the Saudi-Iraqi matches in particular. An official source said the Saudi side gave several suggestions to hold the matches including meeting in Amman or another neutral place. 34 Asian countries divided into 9 groups are participating in the preliminaries. The top team in each group will move to the Feb. 1-April 30 second round where there will be three groups with the top three reaching Sydney.

Football Association in talks with consortium

AMMAN — The Jordan Football Association is still looking for a financial settlement with a four-member consortium that was in charge of marketing the 1998 Premier League after the federation cancelled the competition. In a recent meeting, the federation requested JD30,000 from the consortium, which in turn asked for compensation for cancelling the event.

Handball team returns home

AMMAN — The Jordan handball team returned to Amman Monday after participating in the West Asian Qualifiers, which was held in the Saudi city of Dammam. Jordan beat the Bahraini team 32-19 but was defeated by the Kuwaitis 40-16. The handball federation has now lodged a complaint with the Asian federation after it was announced that Kuwait qualified alongside first placed Saudis although Jordan was leading Kuwait in second place on points.

Joint university sports tournaments discussed

KARAK — A delegation from the Sports Federation of the Palestinian Educational Institutions was received by Jordanian officials to discuss possibilities of holding joint sports activities. Events include table tennis, handball, and basketball.

Compiled by Ahmad Khatib



Marcelo Rios

ATP Tour end-of-year rankings

(AFP) — Final ATP rankings released on Monday:

1. Pete Sampras (USA)	3915 pts
2. Marcelo Rios (Chi)	3670
3. Alex Corretja (Spa)	3398
4. Patrick Rafter (Aus)	3315
5. Carlos Moya (Spa)	3159
6. Andre Agassi (USA)	2879
7. Tim Henman (Gbr)	2620
8. Karol Kucera (Svk)	2579
9. Greg Rusedski (Gbr)	2573
10. Richard Krajicek (Ned)	2548
11. Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Rus)	2515
12. Goran Ivanisevic (Cro)	2137
13. Petr Korda (Cze)	2114
14. Albert Costa (Spa)	1823
15. Mark Philippoussis (Aus)	1792
16. Todd Martin (USA)	1774
17. Thomas Johansson (Swe)	1761
18. Cedric Pioline (Fra)	1710
19. Jan Siemerink (Ned)	1669
20. Felix Mantilla (Spa)	1643
21. Alberto Berasategui (Spa)	1556
22. Thomas Enqvist (Swe)	1500
23. Gustavo Kuerten (Bra)	1472
24. Jonas Bjorkman (Swe)	1439
25. Thomas Muster (Aut)	1344
26. Wayne Ferreira (Rsa)	1285
27. Jason Stoltenberg (Aus)	1280
28. Byron Black (Zim)	1259
29. Michael Chang (USA)	1242
30. Francisco Clavet (Spa)	1216



Pete Sampras

Sampras sees no new challengers

HANOVER (R) — Tennis will remain stuck in a rut next year — the same few players challenging top man Pete Sampras, according to the World No. 1 himself.

Sampras, the best player around for a record sixth consecutive year, said newcomers were nowhere to be seen.

"I think you're going to see pretty much the same guys," he said at the season-ending ATP Tour world championship. "I don't see anyone ranked 40 or 50 that's going to be in the top 10 by this time next year."

Sampras has not been quite as dominant as in previous years, partly because of injury.

But he still won Wimbledon, his 11th grand slam title, and three other tournaments.

Only Australian Roy Emerson has won 12 majors.

"I'm not that old and I've still got plenty to look forward to," said Sampras, 27. "I know that if I'm fit and if I play my best tennis, it's going to be very hard for other guys to beat me."

Obviously, Sampras wants a couple more grand slam victories.

With 248 weeks at World No. 1, he could also beat Ivan Lendl's record 270.

Sampras fell to eventual winner Alex Corretja of Spain in the semifinals in Hanover but his only rival in the race for number one, Chilean Marcelo Rios, had already pulled out injured.

"I regard this as an ultimate achievement," Sampras said of his record. "I don't think it will ever be broken."

The world's finest player also said he sometimes felt he did not receive all the attention and the respect he deserved.

The fact that Sampras, often criticised for his perceived lack of charisma, keeps outclassing the opposition may be a handicap for the sport but there are others. Lack of personalities, a complicated ranking system and the high number of tournaments also explain why fans, sponsors and media are becoming tired of men's tennis.

Aware of that, the ATP Tour, which runs the men's professional circuit, is working on a series of measures aimed at keeping everybody interested.

A new elite series comprising the current Super-9 events and the season's finale will be launched in 2000.

The ATP Tour and the Super-9 tournaments — the highlights of the season outside the grand slams — have signed an agreement with marketing agency ISL/Octagon to market the rights of the events in the series.

The news practically means that the Super-9 tournaments have agreed to keep working together with the ATP Tour and its marketing partner.

The current deal runs until 2000 and rival organisations,

notably Boris Becker, together with marketing agency Prisma, had approached the organisers of the most prestigious tournaments, offering to promote their events.

Becker said his proposals were more lucrative for both the tournaments and the players but ATP Tour boss Mark Miles disagreed.

"To those who say that they can add value to the game, we say that with ISL/Octagon, we have," he said.

Miles said the commercial rights of the events in the new series will be pooled for a long period which has not been determined yet but should run for some 10 years. He said the value of the new package would be around \$100 million a year.

Miles also confirmed that from 2000 there will be a 12-month rankings race with all the players beginning the season at zero and accumulating points throughout the calendar year.

Changes could also be brought to the rules to make the sport more exciting to watch, said Miles. He declined to give details.

FIFA head suggests date for 2002 World Cup

SEOUL (AFP) — The chief of the world football governing body FIFA, Sepp Blatter, Monday suggested the 2002 World Cup finals in South Korea and Japan be held from May and end before the rainy season in July.

Blatter told a news conference before ending a two-day visit to Seoul that it was best the tournament not "go into July" but end by June.

"My idea is to start end of May and finish end of June," Blatter said before leaving for Japan.

South Korean football officials have voiced concern that the 2002 World Cup could be hit badly by the rainy season here which coincides with the finals' traditional timing in June and July.

But playing the finals earlier could force the rescheduling of leagues in Europe and South America and encounter

opposition from the two footballing superpowers. Blatter said he was in Seoul on a courtesy call and "to tell the whole population in Korea that it has the full backing of FIFA" for the 2002 finals, the first to be co-hosted.

He met with South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung after the news conference, and is scheduled to head for Tokyo to watch Japan's '98 Toyota Cup Football tournament.

Blatter said a "positive" report by FIFA delegates made during their inspection tour of South Korea earlier this month would be presented this week.

The visit was Blatter's first to Seoul since he replaced his veteran boss Joao Havelange, who retired in June after ruling world football for 24 years.

Lendl the inspiration for Corretja

HANOVER (R) — Spain's Alex Corretja said he had been inspired by memories of Czech legend Ivan Lendl after battling back from two sets down to defeat compatriot Carlos Moya in the final of the ATP Tour world championship on Sunday.

"I was thinking about Lendl and that French Open final against (John) McEnroe (in 1984), when he came back for two sets down and won in five sets," said Corretja, who did just that to beat Moya 3-6 3-6 7-5 6-3 7-5 in an all-Spanish thriller.

"Lendl was my hero and I was saying to myself 'Come on, do like him.'"

"I was also thinking about members of my family who died," added the 24-year-old, who recently lost an aunt and an uncle.

"I was talking to them in my head, asking them to give me the power to finish the match. This victory is for them."

Winning the longest final of the year and one of the most exciting was sweet revenge for Corretja, crushed in straight sets by Moya in the French Open final last June.

"I was not focused then," he said. "I was playing against a friend in a big match and all that was a bit confusing. I knew that if I was to meet him again in a final I'd have to be mentally stronger. Today, I was."

Victory moved Corretja three places up to third in the year's final rankings.



Alex Corretja

"It's a great way of ending the year," he said. "Now my goal is to fight for the number one ranking but I'm not obsessed with it."

In the middle of the post-

match news conference, somebody brought him a mobile telephone.

"Excuse me, I think it's the king of Spain who wants to talk to me,"

Corretja said. In fact it was Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar. "He's nice too," said Corretja. "The King will probably call later."

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The incumbent will be required to

- Contribute to the Project's annual work programmes and budget;
- Provide support in formulating the Project's annual business plans;
- Coordinate finance operations with counterpart agencies;
- Establish financial/administrative records related to the implementation of the project;
- Monitor all disbursement activities under the Project and ensure timely preparation and submission of disbursement applications to the National Project Coordinator;
- Submit quarterly disbursement progress reports to the National Project Coordinator;
- Liaise with all parties and stockholders involved in the implementation of the Project, and with officials within and outside the Ministry of Industry and Trade;
- Handle, more or less independently, specific tasks and selected assignments within the Project and reporting on progress/problem areas to the National Project Coordinator; and
- Carry out other related activities as may be reasonably requested by the National Project Coordinator.

Candidates must have

- a Bachelor's Degree in Business or Management Studies, Economics or a relevant discipline;
- a good command of English and Arabic communication and presentation skills (speaking, reading and report writing);
- a minimum of three years of experience in execution of projects;
- literacy in computer applications;
- solid and genuine commitment to the Project and ability to work under pressure.

Applications should be received in the UNDP office in Shmeisani, P.O. Box 941631 - Amman 11194 no later than 10 December 1998 in an envelope marked "Governance Unit - Globalization Project". Short-listed candidates will be expected to take a written exam and appear before an interview panel.

Netanyahu wants Syrian talks but no conditions

TEL AVIV (R) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu voiced readiness on Monday to reopen Israel's peace talks with Syria after a nearly three-year freeze so long as there were no preconditions.

Netanyahu denied Israeli news reports Syrian President Hafez Assad had sent a message to the Israeli government offering Israel peace with Lebanon and Syria in return for a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

"If he sent me a message I didn't receive it... I can say our policy here is clear. We are willing to renew negotiations with Syria. But we are not ready to accept dictates that rid talks of any substance," he told Israel Radio.

A U.S. embassy spokesman declined comment on a report in the newspaper Ha'aretz that Assad had sent a similar message to the United States.

Netanyahu suggested Syria, the main power broker in Lebanon, could restrain Hizbollah guerrillas who have killed seven Israeli soldiers in Israel's south Lebanon occupation zone in the last two weeks.

"Of course Syria has a very important role in everything that happens, and could be prevented, in Lebanon," Netanyahu said in a reference to attacks by Hizbollah, an Iranian-backed Shiite guerrilla group.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said on Monday there was a consensus among security experts that the 15-kilometre deep zone was "the best option we have now to defend our population in the northern area, to continue to fight against the terror."

Opposition Labour Party lawmaker Yossi Beilin called

Israeli committee approves law against return of Golan

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli parliament's law committee passed a draft law on Monday aimed at preventing the return of the Golan Heights to Syria or the hand over of east Jerusalem to the Palestinians.

Under the law, any proposal to give up territory annexed by Israel would need the approval of more than 50 per cent of members of parliament and of a referendum.

The draft was submitted by three members of the Third Way, a party which represents the Golan settlers' lobby.

It was approved by a large majority on its first reading in the full house on July 22. To become law, it has to pass three successive readings.

More than 13,000 Israeli settlers live in the Golan Heights, as well as some 17,000 Syrians, most of them Druze.

for a unilateral withdrawal of Israeli troops.

"The government of Israel is gambling every day as long as we are staying in this so-called self-declared security zone. It's not a security zone. It's a death threat to Israel."

"There are many, many high-ranking generals who believe that we have to leave this area... Saying that there is only one view is a big lie," Beilin told reporters.

Netanyahu's spokesman Aviv Bushinsky said the prime minister would convene his cabinet on Wednesday for the second time this week to discuss the Lebanon quagmire.

Last week Netanyahu's senior adviser David Bar-Ilan said there were "back channel" efforts to break the Israeli-Syrian deadlock.

U.S.-mediated talks between Israel and Syria were suspended before the 1996 general elections and have not resumed since the rise to power of Netanyahu's right-wing government.

Damascus has insisted that

talks resume at the point where the previous left-centre Israeli government left off.

Syria says the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told the United States he was willing in principle to hand back all of the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Middle East war.

Netanyahu has rejected this precondition for talks. Hizbollah is waging a guerrilla war to oust the Israeli army from the occupation zone, which Israel holds with the declared aim of preventing guerrilla attacks on its northern communities.

Syria and the Beirut government say Israel's withdrawal must be unconditional. Syria has 35,000 troops in Lebanon. Analysts say Damascus, aiming to regain the strategic heights, has little interest in reducing pressure on Israeli forces in Lebanon by reining in Hizbollah. Israel has held parts of south Lebanon since 1978 and set up the border zone in 1985.



FOR HIS FATHER'S FREEDOM: A Palestinian masked child holds his father's picture at the International Red Cross headquarters in the Gaza Strip on Monday during a protest calling to free sons and fathers jailed in Israel. A Palestinian official said that the prisoners will start next week their hunger strike in all Israeli jails (Reuters photo)

Israel lifts ban on Palestinian VIP travel

EREZ CROSSING (AFP) — Israel reopened the border crossing for Palestinian

VIPs leaving and entering the Gaza Strip on Monday after the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) lifted a blockade on shipments of building materials to a nearby Jewish settlement, Israel's army said.

Dozens of PNA officials, including ministers in Yasser Arafat's autonomy government, were prevented from travelling between the West Bank and Gaza Strip Sunday by the Israeli move.

Major General Yomtov Samia, the commander of Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip, closed the VIP crossing early in the day after Palestinian police prevented several trucks carrying cement and other building materials from reaching the small Jewish settlement of Netzarim in central Gaza.

Samia called the police

move a flagrant violation of Israeli-Palestinian peace accords. Palestinian officials countered that building new homes in Jewish settlements violated the agreements.

Israeli army spokesmen said Samia ordered the VIP passage at the Erez Crossing reopened after the Palestinians allowed the construction materials into Netzarim late Sunday night.

"The Palestinians called us and said they were willing to allow the trucks inside and asked us to open the Erez checkpoint and we did that," said Lieutenant Avi Gambash, spokesman for Israeli forces in Gaza.

"The trucks got into Netzarim last night," he said.

But Saeb Al Ajaz, the Palestinian police commander for northern Gaza, denied that any deal had been struck and insisted the Palestinians' new poli-

cy was to prevent building materials from entering the Jewish enclaves.

"We did not agree to let them pass, we agreed to meet tomorrow with the Israelis to discuss the issue of the trucks and why they want this material in Netzarim," Ajaz told AFP.

Ajaz insisted that a clause in last month's Wye River peace agreement with Israel barring "unilateral actions" that change the status of the West Bank or Gaza Strip prohibits home-building in the Jewish enclaves.

Israel insists it maintains the right to build in existing settlements to accommodate the "natural growth" of the communities.

Settlers in Netzarim, which currently has only 45 families, say they need to build additions to existing homes as well as units for prospective new residents.

Gambash said army officials agreed to meet Palestinian officials Tuesday "to explain to them that they are not allowed to stop any vehicles, Israeli or civilian or army, it's against the agreements."

"If they have a problem with cement going to Netzarim, we can talk about it, but they can't just block vehicles," he said.

Under interim Israeli-Palestinian peace accords, Palestinian legislators and officials in the PNA were granted VIP permits allowing them to travel between the West Bank and Gaza Strip through Israeli territory.

In practice the officials are often held up at Israeli-controlled crossing points, especially following major anti-Israeli attacks by Palestinian activists.

Search for Lebanese prime minister starts

(Continued from page 1)

A brief meeting on Monday between the two did not help resolve the disagreements.

Hariri's cabinet has been serving in a caretaker capacity since Lahoud's inauguration last Tuesday.

Lahoud on Monday set the stage for choosing a new prime minister when he scheduled a fresh round of consultations with parliament for Tuesday and Wednesday.

In a statement, Lahoud said Hariri was asked but declined to form the next government after a previous round of consultations.

The offer came after the 128 legislators polled by the president gave Hariri a majority but fell short of the near unanimous backing he had received in his previous three mandates since 1992.

Hariri is credited with restoring economic confidence and stabilising the

national currency. His globe-trotting travels to drum up political and economic support were sometimes instrumental in drawing international financial aid and investment.

But he was faulted for declining living standards at home and a rise in corruption in government.

Lahoud pledged in a tough inauguration speech to clean up the graft-riddled administration. The general enjoys widespread popular backing after succeeding in rebuilding an army fractured by civil war.

Central bank officials on Monday tried to calm fears about a run on the Lebanese pound by announcing that the bank was ready to intervene with its foreign currency reserves if necessary, the state-run National News Agency reported. It added that the money markets remained stable.

Clinton pledges to boost assistance to Palestinians

(Continued from page 1)

The increase in U.S. aid, which is subject to congressional approval, was announced after Clinton met with Arafat at the White House and then spoke at the conference at the State Department.

Clinton said Arafat had reaffirmed his pledge to uphold his side of agreements with Israel and to work with Israel to ensure security.

The new U.S. money is designed to spur stepped-up contributions from nations assembled here for a one-day conference on economic assistance for the West Bank and Gaza.

Five years ago, more than \$2 billion was pledged. The nearly doubling of U.S. aid is based on the notion that combating poverty in Palestinian-controlled areas will promote peace agreements with Israel and curb conflict.

The pace of delivering the \$400 million boost will be determined after development projects are identified, an official told the Associated Press

on condition he not be identified.

On Sunday, Arafat reiterated his intention to proclaim statehood for the Palestinians next year.

In response, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatened to walk away from accords with Arafat if the Palestinian leader tried unilaterally to set up a state.

Palestinian negotiator Hassan Asfour said the Palestinians are paying no heed to Netanyahu's threats. "Let him shout as much as he pleases," Asfour said of the Israeli leader.

Clinton plans to visit Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Dec. 12-15. He will address the Palestinian National Council and oversee implementation of a critical element of the peace accord with Israel reached in October.

The council meeting in Gaza on Dec. 14, is due to reaffirm the revocation of clauses in the Palestine Liberation Organisation's charter calling for Israel's destruction.

Sudan sends lions to Saddam

CAIRO (AP) — Sudan has sent Iraqi President Saddam Hussein a gift of two African lions, the London-based Al Wassat weekly said in its Monday edition.

The paper said the beasts, apparently captured in Sudan, were sent by Sudan's interior minister, Brig. Abdul Raheem Muhammad Hussein.

"The two lions crossed the Jordanian territories into Iraq last week," the magazine said. Sudanese officials in Jordan confirmed the report.

It was unclear if the lions were intended as a personal gift for Saddam or for Iraq's zoo, where many animals reportedly have perished since the United Nations imposed trade sanctions against Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Sudan is among a handful of Arab countries that have supported Iraq since the 1991 Gulf war, which drove Iraq from Kuwait, and its Islamic government maintains close relations with Baghdad.

Turkish generals warn squabbling politicians

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's powerful generals issued a pointed warning to squabbling politicians on Monday that they should avoid comments that could draw the army into politics.

The warning, from the strongly secularist General Staff, appeared directed at the Islamist Virtue Party, but it reflected broader worries over uncertainty that has followed the collapse of Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz's government last week.

The General Staff, which has an established role as "guardian" of the secularist order, urged political leaders in a statement to "show the necessary care and sensitivity" in negotiations to form a new government.

"We consider it beneficial that anyone with responsibility in the correct way and should

avoid statements which could draw the armed forces into politics," the statement, reported by the state-owned Anatolian agency, said.

"It is out of the question to say the Turkish Armed Forces likes one party over another."

The comments followed reported comments by Recai Kutan, head of the Islamist Virtue Party.

The Milliyyet daily quoted Kutan on Saturday as saying: "I have higher chances than Yilmaz to form the new government... I have no worries about the military. We are seeing signs that the military likes the policies of our party."

According to convention, Kutan, as head of the largest party in parliament, should be given the first opportunity to form a new government. The General Staff statement could

be interpreted by secularist parties as a caution against offering concessions to Virtue for tacit or active backing in breaking deadlock.

Even mainstream secularist leaders like Yilmaz of the Motherland Party and former Premier Tansu Ciller of the rival True Path would be ill advised to publicly claim the favour of the military. Such a boast from the head of an Islamist party might seem close to foolhardy.

Turkey's powerful armed forces have a history of involvement in politics, launching three military coups between 1960 and 1980. Pressure from the generals led to the downfall of the country's first Islamist-led government in June last year.

Yilmaz, whose coalition of secularists replaced the Islamists, appeared on

national television later on Monday to list what he saw as his government's achievements in 16 months in power.

First in his accounting was a reduction in tension the Islamist-led government had caused "at the top of the state and in the armed forces."

"The headscarves of our mothers and grandmothers, the prayers of our people... everything we know as sacred had become a political plaything," he said.

Since arrival of Yilmaz's government, the Welfare Party it replaced in power has been banned and officials of the successor Virtue Party have been prosecuted on charges of violating the constitution.

The military, which initiated and pressed the judicial campaign, would be wary of any attempt by secularist parties to "buy" Virtue support

with promises of aborning prosecutions.

The General Staff, invoking secular state founder Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, made clear it would not tolerate any flirtation with political Islam.

"The Turkish armed forces... have shown by consistent behaviour and attitudes that they value all contemporary views which comply with Ataturk's principles and reforms which are in line with the basic principles of the constitution."

The National Security Council, which groups the civilian and political leadership of the country, met on Monday afternoon.

The secretive body was expected to discuss efforts to form a government as well as Turkey's dispute with Italy over the fate of Kurdish separatist guerrilla Abdullah Ocalan.

Celebrity sheep killed by elephant

JOHANNESBURG (R) — A ewe that achieved celebrity status in South Africa has been killed, probably by the baby elephant she adopted from the wild. "Skaap" — the name is Afrikaans for sheep — was found dead last week in the shed she shared with Jabulani, the two-year-old elephant she had raised as one of her own. "The elephant may have pinned her by mistake. He's done it before," Peter Rogers, the veterinarian who performed the autopsy, told Reuters. Rogers said the elephant was doing reasonably well. "He seems okay now, but he was very quiet for the first couple of days after the incident."

Garbage collectors stage anti-student protest

JAKARTA (AP) — Fed up with traffic jams caused by almost daily student street protests, dozens of garbage collectors staged their own demonstration Monday — against demonstrations through downtown Jakarta waving red and white Indonesian flags. "Student protests confuse people," said one of their banners. A protest coordinator, who identified himself by the single name of Zaki, said students had the right to criticise the government. But they should not take to the streets, he said.

Insect man bugged by film

LINCOLN (AP) — Leon Higley is a little bit bugged by Disney's latest movie. The professor of entomology at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln has some problems with "A Bug's Life." If an animated film was made about birds, he suggested, cartoonists would never draw four wings on the Ocreatures. So why, Higley wants to know, would filmmakers give ants in the movie four legs instead of six? Disney and Pixar studios did just that. Higley says it's just one more example of contempt for insects.

Horse falls into swimming pool

KENNESAW (AP) — You can lead a horse to water, but don't let him wander onto the swimming-pool cover. Ask Katrina Duncan, a house-sitter turned lifeguard after Ace, a Tennessee walking horse, plunged through the plastic covering into the deep end of a pool Saturday night. Duncan had gone outside to feed the 545-kilogram horse but couldn't find him. She then saw the tear in the pool cover. After calling authorities, Duncan, 29, climbed into the chilly pool, got hold of the horse's neck and led him to the shallow end.

Runaway steer cornered on sports field

MELBOURNE (AP) — A runaway steer charged at its pursuers and frustrated attempts to capture it for hours even after it was cornered in cricket nets Monday. The steer was first spotted on a sports field shortly before 8:30 a.m. when a passerby reported that it was charging about. Then it was charged at by police and animal control officers trying to round it up. A police spokeswoman said they had no idea where the steer came from.